

ABSTRACT

The paper compares three divided twin towns at river borders: Komárno/Komárom (SK-HU), Cieszyn/Český Těšín (PL-CZ), and Görlitz/Zgorzelec (DE-PL). Our fundamental question is: are twin towns separated urban entities in a close neighbourhood, or do they represent reunited townscapes and local societies? First of all, we discuss the essential concepts concerning borders, transborder regions, twin towns and divided twin towns, based on papers by David Newman (2006), Tamás Hardi (2001), Helga Schultz (2003), Jan Buursnik (1994) and Christoph Waack (2000). The second part of the paper focuses on the process of integration. It focuses on subjects which determine the everyday actions of urban society. Firstly, we present the facts which frame everyday contact between people: history and topography. We make the claim that the river, the breadth of bridges and patterns of urban structure determine the manner and frequency of people's mobility. The natural topography of Komárno/Komárom makes social interaction between the two parts difficult. In the cases of other towns, it is less the river itself than the last hundred years of urban planning that creates disintegration in the townscapes. We also discuss language barriers, which are not separate from national identities. Ethnic relations and language barriers are the most important factors as to why two sides fail to integrate. The linguistic networks of national minorities (Hungarian in Komárno, Polish in Český Těšín or the new Polish minority in Görlitz) cannot operate effectively because of inter-ethnic stereotypes and spatial distances. Finally, we examine everyday interaction through a very simple but important research question: why people would visit the city on the other side of the river. The empirical results show that the interactions in twin towns are reduced mostly to non-personal actions: shopping or taking a walk. Summarising the results, we argue that divided twin towns are far from being integrated and "reunited" urban structures. From a sociological point of view, the borderlines and frontier zones of the present urban places more or less overlap the mental (ethnic and language) zones of their inhabitants, as well as the economic differences in both sections of the twin town.

Key words

border regions, culture heritage, minority studies, urban sociology, space and society, Central European studies

The concept in the title was not invented by the authors of this paper (See Jajesniak-Quast–Stokłosa 2000, Schultz 2003). It is a general notion that, in the process of EU enlargement, border towns should open up to one another. At the same time,

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the question arises how this opening process should be realized. The special example of a reunited Berlin shows us that the integration process is not simple (Kerégyártó 2008). The integration process is even more complex in the case of divided twin towns on the German-Polish, Czech-Polish and Slovakian-Hungarian borders. Besides existing borders, the ethnic relationships and the topography at the various rivers have to be mentioned. The river itself can be a sharp barrier even in cities like Budapest or Prague (Csanádi et al. 2010).

Our fundamental question sounds like this: are twin towns separated urban entities in a close neighbourhood or do they represent reunited townscapes and local societies? In other words: has the integration process of twinning two towns actually created one singular town lying in two countries? The case of twin towns is interesting not only in the Central European region. Because of topography of twin towns, we may conclude that the opening process arises not a force of EU politics but from the need of inhabitants. But on the other hand, ethnic relationships can slow down integration. The laboratories of twin towns show us the contrasting factors of the opening process and isolation strategies in the new situation.

Looking for a special case of twin-town development, we will compare three twin towns without any pretence of completeness: Komárno/Komárom (SK-HU), Cieszyn/Český Těšín (PL-CZ), and Görlitz/Zgorzelec (DE-PL).⁴ First of all the paper discusses the essential concepts concerning border, the transborder region, the twin town and the divided twin town, based on papers by David Newman (2006), Hardi Tamás (2001), Helga Schultz (2003), Jan Buursnik (1994) and Christoph Waack (2000). The second part of this paper focuses on the process of integration. We cannot study all levels of integration, like for example political cooperation, multinational economic structures or common urban infrastructures. Therefore, we focus on subjects which determine the everyday actions of urban society. Firstly, we present the facts which frame the everyday contacts of people: history and topography. The second part discusses language barriers, which are not separate from national identities. Finally, we examine everyday interaction through a very simple but important question: why people would visit the city on the other side of the river.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To conceive a notion of divided towns along borders, first the border itself should be investigated. Primarily, investigating borders appears to be the most popular theme in regional geography, social geography and settlement sociology, along with their own international periodicals like *Journal of Borders* or *Journal of Borderlands Studies*. Challenges arising from globalization fuel the growing interest in borders (Newman 2006: 144). The EU's enlargement process determines the political and economic globalization of our region; consequently the divided towns along borders have served as laboratories of integration for several social-geographical and sociological studies (Schutz 2005).

State borders – at least in Europe – are easily measurable entities, having been determined in international legal documents (Bruhács 1999: 81). An immediate question arises: what is the relationship between natural geography and political geography? The natural geographer, Friedrich Ratzel, claimed that natural borders usually belong to difficult terrain: deserts, seas, and high mountains (Ratzel 1897: 501). Political state organizations determine their borders accordingly. Although natural

⁴As we write about both parts, we will give both names. In case of historical facts before 1920 and 1945 we will use the former official names: Teschen, Komárom and Görlitz.

borders seem to be a logical presumption, they can be applied to technologically poorly developed countries. The British colonial empire, for example, could expand by leaping across the most powerful natural barrier: the ocean. Impermeability, therefore, is a rather relative, variable condition; consequently different things have been considered natural borders in different eras and societies (Hardi 2001: 2).

Commonly, borders are deemed natural even when they separate different ethnic, religious and cultural groups. Peter Hagget (1979) differentiates three borders as such: subsequent boundaries, antecedent boundaries, and superimposed boundaries. The first two cases roughly cover demographic conditions: either in a way that the different ethnic groups have settled separately from one another in the first place; or in a way that they have adapted to an already present border or boundary (like a natural-topographical demarcation line, e.g. a mountain or a river). In the third case, however, the border occurs afterwards, regardless of the given conditions and changing cultural spheres. Divided border towns undoubtedly represent this type. This model fails, however, in that it ignores forced border transformation. As the forced border line will eventually behave as an antecedent boundary, the national state's language, educational system, religion, visual and architectural culture will mould the belonging border town into its own image.

The regional aspect highlights another dimension of border concept. When a political border means a line without expansion on the map, then actual geographical processes do possess a tangible spatiality. Although rivers seem linear, natural formations still prove that they exist as a space delineated by a hydrographical system impossible to understand without the existence of the 'other side'. However, the spatial structure of social borders appears to be less palpable than hydrographical lines. Often, language borders, for example, cannot be described linearly. It is more about transitions, changing proportions, regional bilingualism, and mixed language identity. Today, South Slovakia is typically such a border region inhabited by Hungarians and Slovaks; nonetheless Teschen's vicinity has been as such historically (Hannan 1996; Szarka 2003; Mannová 2009). Town markets and catchment areas of services, as well as local marriage markets, migration and employment motivations, etc., also possess spatiality. That is why a border line has to be distinguished from a border region or border zone (Hansen 1983; Rechnitzer 1999; Martinez 1994; Veggeland 1997). The border zone is a complex system of economic, demographic and custom transitions. In many cases, the architectural heritage of the former state frameworks may describe the border zone. The common cultural heritage of the Czech-Polish borderland comprises the railway stations deriving from the K. u. K. era. The research of the border zones has become crucial in parallel with opening the borders. Presumably, the traversable borders promote the formation of border zones and fresh cooperation of formerly divided areas.

This has led us to the most often-investigated issue of border discourses: the dualities of "out-in", "open-closed", "us-them" (Newman 2006: 143). The last twenty years may be described as the process of opening up the borders in Central European region. So much the more because under state socialism the border situation meant an explicitly unilateral, introverted relation system with few crossing points (Tóth–Csatári 1983). Border stations played an important role in this model as exclusive points in that fundamentally closed world, having a peculiar local milieu: the presence of police and customs forces, along with emerging smuggling and corruption. All three towns were crossing points of international significance under socialism.⁵ With border control easing up after 1990, the development prospects opened up for the formerly estranged borderland (Martinez 1994). Firstly, a parallel existence of two borderlands may occur without administrative exclusion but also

⁵ Note that this crossing function was not very new. The riverside towns used to be a 'ferry crossing' point as well.

without cooperation. Secondly, an intensive cooperation occurs but with the dominance of one party (e.g. processing, raw material production, employer-employee regions, town districts). Thirdly, both sides have approximately the same level of development and commitment to integration.

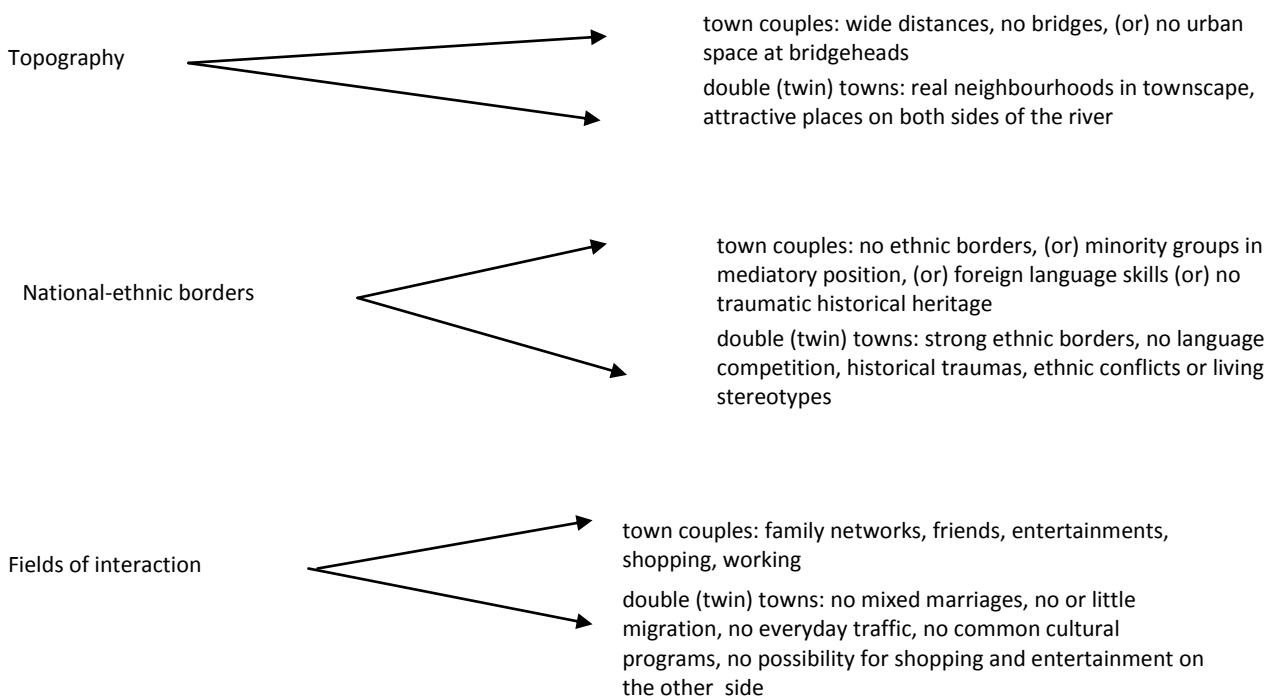
The question may arise too, why the separated regions should be interested in closer cooperation. It is not self-evident (Hardi 2001: 6). The dynamic part is interested in expanding beyond the border, while the weaker one often finds its interest in closing-in and market protection. The border is also an emotional line. Populations on the two sides will not necessarily want to cooperate; often, unresolved historical traumas and language incompetence impede the formation of a common town space. Finally, even in unified Europe, the national state's political elite might not find interest in merging border towns.

Numerous authors have attempted to translate the above concepts of border and border region into the special relations of border towns. All the more as there are nearly 60 twin towns along borders in Europe (Buursink 1994, Ehlers 2001, Joenniemi and Sergunin 2011, Schultz 2003, Waack 2000). Most of them lie by a river. Therefore, their crossing bridges provide their typical morphological feature. Towns divided in the 20th century comprise a separate group within twin towns. Almost all divided towns lie in the middle, eastern and southern parts of the continent (Schultz 2003: 9). In these cases, the new state border did not account for the integrity of the local urban space. In some extremes, the border cleaves the street, as in Valka/Valga (LV, EE), but usually the naturally given river line was taken as a basis. As the negative, often traumatic experience caused by border delineation is still not far away, historical remembrance represents a further disintegration factor. Therefore, opening the borders has not automatically brought about common urban spaces.

According to these border discourses, Jan Buursink (1994) differentiates town couples and double (twin) towns. Town couples comprise a closed system with detached spatial and social structures that only relate to the national state. Contrary, the double (twin) town has interest in cooperation. Many municipal services and developments, like flood protection, waste-water clearing, transport, retaining the workforce, attracting investments, or promoting tourism can be more easily realized in a common urban space. Another typology of Waack's (2000) adds that the opportunities for cooperation largely depend on the different powers of the twin towns. Great differences may occur on the two sides of the bridge depending on the general economic conditions of nation states. Based on documents of regional development, Waack defines three aspects: workplaces, that is, which sector is the leading employer; centrality, that is, what position the twin town holds in the national regional space structure; and permeability, the quality and character of the bridge connections between the two towns (Waack 2000: 60). The model has a great advantage, for it displays the question of morphological relation, so that the distance between the two towns – as for the number of bridges and their traffic – directly affects the degree of integration. Altogether however, neither Waack's, nor others' writings emphasize settlement morphology enough; albeit, in our consideration, settlement morphology is indeed the key issue in the formation of common urban spaces.

As shown, the integration process has very different interpretations. The definition of integration depends on questions of investigation. Because we want to understand everyday actions of urban life, after a short look at history, we have to understand the topographical situation where the interactions happen. Comparing twin towns to border regions, we can point out that the specific feature of twin towns is the physical neighbourhood. But this feature is relative and it will be narrowed down to the topographical middle: to the riverbanks. The riverbank assures the fundamental frame for everyday interactions; the bridges link together the townscape. The twin town needs real neighbourhood topography where the distances are passable

and where there are usable urban spaces at the bridge heads. The second important factor of integration is whether the border line overlaps the ethnic borders, and if yes, are there any strategies for handling the ethnic and language border. Therefore, in our theoretical model, we envisage the urban spaces primarily as zones comprised by ethnic groups. So much more, because the political borders made in 1920 and 1945 were a part of nation-state building and the social identification is not to become separate from ethnic relations (us/them). In the end, we search for answers as to why the twin towns' inhabitants visit the other side. In fact, we presume that in the past 20 years, stronger and weaker interactive fields have occurred between the ethnic zones which interweave the twin towns' everyday life from relatives and friends, to employment and shopping. Integrated society means here having relatives and friends from the other side and using entertainment, shopping and working possibilities.



HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

The important feature of a given town results from its historical heritage that developed at the beginnings of the 20th century. At that time, two of the towns in question belonged to the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, one to the powerful German Empire. In fact, none of them could be called 'a city' then, yet Görlitz, with its 90,000 inhabitants, definitely represented a wider urban area than Teschen and Komárom with population hardly over 20,000 (Haslinger Kreft et al. 2010: 8; Mácza 1992: 11; Siwek 2009: 45).

Let me highlight that until the era of industrialisation, no twin town existed on the other bank at either site. In the K. u. K. Monarchy towns, there was a railway station which affected the development of the other side (Számádó 2007: 60; Frühwirth

1973: 342),⁶ whereas Görlitz had its railway station placed next to the historical town (see Wifried 1994). The first wave of modern urbanization had taken place on the territory between the historical town and railway-tracks (Bednarek 1991: 63). The build-up of a tran-sriver area started later, but because of the recession after the First World War most of the planned garden suburbs were never realized (Schmidt 1994: 120). It sounds strange, but if Görlitz had been divided after 1918, it would have developed in a more dynamic way. At least the history of divided Teschen and Komárom renders this hypothesis possible.

Both of them were already divided after the collapse of K.u.K Monarchy, parallel to the founding of new nation states. An essential difference between them is that in the case of Teschen both nation states (Poland and Czechoslovakia) valued the change of borders as territorial gains, while Hungary was definitely the loser of the new European system after 1920 (Pragenau 1976: 102; Kovács 2011: 107; Makowski et al. 2010: 45). At the same time, it has to be mentioned that the dividing of former Teschen to Cieszyn (PL) and Český Těšín (CSR) incurred bitter conflicts between Poland and Czechoslovakia not only in nationally but also at the local level.⁷

The new state borders forced the creation of new towns in the place of the former suburbs: (Komárom, HU and Český Těšín, CSR). There were no differences between the regional politics of victorious Prague and defeated Budapest (Bierbauer 1941, Badurová et al. 2010: 173). The Hungarian political elite demonstrated the continuity of a historical state organism with this act. The new town of Komárom was founded to fill in the administrative role for the historical town which was the seat of a whole governmental region (*comitat*). The expansion of Český Těšín definitely had another message: it demonstrated independence from the other side. The architecture style was in both cases full of historical symbols as compensation for the uncertain historical identity of the new town.

World War II brought different changes of borders but eventually the 1920 status quo was reinstalled both in Teschen and Komárom (Pragenau 1976: 114; Bottoni 2011: 139). The 1945 peace treaty of Potsdam ordered a change in the German-Polish borderland to the Oder–Lausitzer Neisse (Odra–Nysa Łużycka) line. This act made Görlitz a divided twin town (see Jajesniak-Quast 2000).⁸

While the peace treaty after World War I could not assure the status quo because the vanquished states had not accepted it, the conclusion of Potsdam proved immovable. The reason for this was the presence of the Red Army which checked on the inviolability of the borders (Schmitt 2003: 203). The dictatorships of Central Europe strictly limited border crossings. The isolation was also manifested on maps, for example in tourist maps which would not show the other side of the twin town. Although the isolation was not steady in the period of 1945–1989, and the local elites could establish cooperation between twin towns, the main characteristic was separation (see Bottoni 2011; Opiłowska 2011). The townscape integrated this separation deeply because the period of 1960–1980 represented a massive extension in both parts of twin towns with the typical elements of urban planning of their home country. At the end of this historical era, we have to mention that opening the borders after

⁶As concerns Teschen, the one-time private-enterprise Kassa-Oderberg (now: Košice–Bohumín) railtrack traversing present Slovakia was built in 1869–1872 to establish a direct connection between the then East-Hungary and Silesia. Komárom got a railway station from Vienna in 1856, and it was extended to Budapest in 1884 (the name of the station was that time Újszőny). Nevertheless, the Budapest-Szob-Budapest rail route remained the fastest link between Vienna and Budapest (Frisnyák 2010).

⁷The Košice–Bohumín rail track crossing Teschin was vital for the young Czechoslovakia, because otherwise the northern Slovakian towns could have been reached only with a great detour.

⁸Other divided border towns: Frankfurt am Oder/Ślubiice, Guben/Gubin and Forst/Zasieki.

1990 was not the same as in the case of Berlin. The engines of integration are not the national governments, nor the local authorities but the supranational EU funds which finance transnational projects (Joenniemi-Sergunin 2011).

TOPOGRAPHY

Following our concept, we ask whether there was any prospect to create common urban spaces as morphological entities in the divided twin towns. We are not thinking about dominant functional spaces which attract people from the other side, like gastronomy, shopping, or entertainment zones. We mean frontier urban spaces where the urban life of both sides influences the milieu. We would show the spaces which form and limit the possibility of social integration of the divided towns. These spaces may develop only in the area of the river because of the topographical situation.

The relation between the river and town is one of the most important aspects of the twin towns. First of all, it is obvious that most historical structures do not expand along the river banks. The historical townscapes of the three twin towns seem to be solid fortifications above the banks. An open transit to the river existed only by means of bridges and ports. Behind the common ground structure, there are very important differences in details. The map of historical Görlitz shows a very obvious connection with the river. The bridgehead is one of the most important squares of the towns. The river itself is not very wide, so another space has been formed on the other bank, too. The railway moved its expansion to the south, so the historical bridgehead found itself in the half-periphery of the town. A modern bridge has been built, thanks to which Görlitz has occupied its suburb, what was latterly Zgorzelec. The historical bridge has lost its function. After its demolition during the Second World War, the historical bridge was not reconstructed until 2004. The bridgehead square on the Polish side had been wiped out totally. The socialist urban planning aimed to create a new centre as far as possible from the other side, which meant no connection with the river. In spite of the integration processes, Görlitz and Zgorzelec show a separate urban topography. Their centres lie far from each other. This distance is not a consequence of the natural fundamentals of the river valley (as the river is narrow and its water balance is relatively stable). The distance is more a result of socialist urban planning. Today, it is not realistic to establish a new centre along the river. Not least because such an idea would bring a negative effect in the ecological system of the townscape destroying green areas. Not even the aesthetic arguments are in favour of an intensive development. The real scenario for a common urban area could be a mixture of services (like cafés, bars) and spaces for recreation activities. The historical public gardens on the German side may benefit, while the price differences of services between Germany and Poland encourage the establishment of gastro-venues on the Polish river bank with a view to the historical townscape.

The most favourable topography for common urban spaces can be found in Český Těšín/Cieszyn. The bridgehead square (Zamkowa street) was in the historical town, not only a place for crossing the river but the foreground to the castle as well. Thus, it was the meeting point of a residential area and the burgher town. Yet, the other bank had mostly remained empty from structures until the age of railway. The railway was the first step towards crossing the river. Later, the buildings of the late 19th century had to accept the railway embankments, as a morphological fact. The strange reversing of the main street in the present Český Těšín is a result of both the river and railway station. The main road leading from the historical bridge had to turn nearly 90 degrees in order to get to the station (Hlavní street–Nádražní street). After 1918, the young independent border town, Český Těšín, developed an active building policy in the territory between the station and the river bank. But this area was too tight to accommodate the growing number of flats and public buildings. Thus, a “second new town” developed in the 1930s across the

railway embankments. The main square of Český Těšín (ČSA square), situated between the linear axes of the river and the railway embankment, cannot fulfil the function of a central area. Nevertheless, the main street from the bridgehead to the railway station has remained vital until today. This urban area of the main street goes directly to the bridge over the Olza/Olše. The bridge itself is only 50 metres long and it leads to the “entrance” of the inner town of Cieszyn. This closeness in topography of both centres offers an ideal starting point for creating a common urban central district.

A very different situation can be observed in Komárno/Komárom where the river Dunaj/Duna constitutes a very sharp border. As a matter of fact, to cross the bridge, one needs to cover eight times the distance of Český Těšín/Cieszyn, thus the idea of a common urban space is unrealistic. A further factor is that both the banks of Komárno and Komárom brim with industrial structures. The townscapes of the river banks make one feel as if one was in the outskirts of the twin towns. The railway station in Komárom and the dockyards in Komárno are very important economic fundamentals of the towns, but they do not invite one for a walk. In order to cross the bridge between the twin towns, people use their cars in most cases. The heavy traffic spoils the idea of a pleasant promenade over the Dunaj/Duna.

Summarising our observations, we can point out that the twin towns’ relation to the river bank is very peculiar when seen from the point of view of urban planning. The historical towns used to occupy only one river bank, the other side was mostly only a suburb. The division of the urban area has created a new and unusual situation. For further investigations about social trends, we always have to take into consideration the proportions of the urban space and the river valley, the natural potential of river banks, and the heritage of urban planning of the last century which has undeniably isolated the river side.

NATIONAL-ETHNIC BORDERS

This paper offers no room to discuss the concept of identity in its complexity; therefore the national-ethnic relations will be understood here in terms of language. Our short description focuses on overlapping national-language groups and political borders. The main question is whether there have been any interactions between the bearers of the national languages in the parts of twin towns; and if so, how they work.

The three locations represent three models. The most marked language border is found between Görlitz and Zgorzelec. The deportation and settlement processes after 1945 brought into existence separated language groups. The new Polish settlers coming from the regions far away from the German-Polish contact zones faced the German side not only as foreign but also as enemy. The knowledge of the language of the other part even today is not self-evident in this twin town (Kunert 2002: 10); 15.1% of the inhabitants of Zgorzelec declare that they understand German and can communicate in this language easily; 31.7% say that they understand it but can answer only simple questions; 34.9% know only few words or phrases and 18.3% do not know this language at all.⁹ In Görlitz, the percentage of people who understand Polish is marginal, and very few people learn this language. It is easy to observe a correlation between the level of the German language mastery and the frequency of visits in Görlitz by the inhabitants of Zgorzelec, which results in the conclusion that this competence is still a barrier to trans-border

⁹ This data, so far unpublished, comes from the research project *Zgorzelecjakomiatopograniczne w opiniachjegovmieszkańców*, carried out in Zgorzelec in 2010 by KamillaDolińska and Natalia Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak from the Institute of Sociology University of Wrocław.

activity here (Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2011: 53). The same is not so obvious in the case of Germans coming to Poland, as there are quite a lot of people working in the shops or services of Zgorzelec who are at least communicative in German.

But it is not only linguistic barriers that divide the local societies. The anthropologist, Svenja Reinke studied the procedures of guides: “The guide stressed her local identity, as usual in this situation [...] after crossing the bridge, she began to speak in the third person: they are Catholic, they used the stones of imperial statues for road-building, the rehabilitation of urban places has just started but they take care of little gardens” (Reinke 2008: 10). The distinction of ‘us and them’ is not the only thing of interest here. The cognitive content of the speech expresses isolation as well; yet the feeling of distance is less a result of historical conflicts. The contemporary economic inequality between the two parts may play the most important role in it. The inhabitants of Görlitz associate Zgorzelec with the stereotypes typically ascribed to Poles by Germans: dangerous places, robberies, thefts, etc. As pointed out by Zbigniew Kurcz (2011: 258–259), this is why some people avoid going there or are even proud of not visiting the Polish part of the town at all. As for the attitude the inhabitants of Zgorzelec have towards their Görlitz neighbours, it is a mixture of indifference (53.5%) and liking (39.3%), and so this approach can thus be deemed ‘warm indifference’. Germans are most often described as precise, cultural and being on time (Dębicki–Doliński 2011: 110, 115, 143). Kamilla Dolińska (2011: 76) notices that around 60–70% of the inhabitants of Zgorzelec when thinking of their Görlitz neighbours point at “the acceptance of a close presence, normality, the community of interests, neutrality and kindness”. Additionally, about two-thirds of the people under examination exclude conflict and mutual negative attitude from the area of their experience.

The language-ethnic border between Cieszyn/Český Těšín is not like the one in Görlitz/Zgorzelec. The former Teschen at the turn of the century was a mixture of cultures. The regional identity of ‘autochtons’ included a special language code, named Silesian or Teschen Silesian, with elements from Czech, Polish, Slovak, German. The national school system and other institutions in the 20th century have done away with this multi-language identity (Hannan 1996, 1999; Luft 2009: 11). In spite of this, the Polish-Czech language border is traversable. First of all, no historical traumas hinder the relations. The local conflicts after 1918–19 seem to be not a historical but a present fact in the local identity (Makowski et al. 2010: 46). The National Socialist occupation and the deportation of Germans after 1945 led to a sort of ‘coalition’ of the two Slavic nationalities. Nowadays, although there have been some misunderstandings between both national groups that traditionally characterize that kind of relations, they are, generally speaking without any serious historical conflicts. Zygmunt Kłodnicki enumerates an extended list of stereotypes Poles have towards their neighbours across the river (they all were regarded as ‘Czechs’, no matter what type of ethnic identification was preferred in individual cases), gathered in Cieszyn and its surroundings. These include: *Pepiki*, *knedliki*, people who do not like Poles, speak an amusing language, cowards, keen on beer, cheerful. They are also bad drivers, mean and religiously indifferent. As for the positive characteristics, sometimes the Czech order and eagerness for sport was mentioned here (Kłodnicki 2012: 35–67). Generally speaking, these attributes are usually also ascribed to Czechs beyond the Český Těšín borderland. The difference is that here the characteristics of Czechs seem more negative than elsewhere in Poland.

The case of Cieszyn/Český Těšín is characterized by a natural language competence. The similarity of both Slavic languages makes it possible for people to understand each other in everyday situations. For its ethnic composition, Cieszyn is a homogenous town. The language competence (understanding of Czech) there derives from: (a) a regional language (dialect)

that, to some extent, tends to be used in both parts of the town; (b) different types of contact with Czechs (both in Polish and Czech part of the town) and with ethnic Poles living in Teschen Silesia. The situation is analogous for the inhabitants of Český Těšín. Moreover, the elder Czech generations have a socialization benefit, because in the times of Czechoslovakia they used to understand a foreign Slavic language (Siwek 2010; Sokolová et al. 1997). Additionally, Czechs get in contact with their neighbours' language because of the Polish minority living in the town and their right to have bilingual names of the streets or institutions. According to the 2001 census, the Polish minority in Český Těšín constituted 16.1% and was the most numerous in the town. The other most popular identification patterns present there include: Silesian, Moravian, Zaolziak, Slovak, Vietnamese and Romani. The language of communication of the Polish minority in Český Těšín depends on the situations. For example, the research on the pupils of the Gymnasium with Polish as a Teaching Language shows that it is the dialect that is used in communication between the members of the family, schoolmates or acquaintances (around 86–97%). Polish also dominates in conversations with the teachers, which is obvious in the case of this school. As for the pupils' mother tongue, it is usually Polish (50.2%), the dialect (45.4%) and Czech (20.1%) (Grabowska 2013: 265). Because of its multilingual habit, the Polish minority represents a contact zone between both parts of the twin towns.

Komárno/Komárom represents a special case, because a Hungarian majority exists in both parts. However, this fact should not mean that the border would not have been changing the national relations until today. In 1920, the border divided the town with a near 90% Hungarian population; but today only 60% of the population of Komárno (SK) has a Hungarian nationality (Simon 2011: 89; Census SK 2001). Komárno is a bilingual cultural zone but this does not mean there is equality. The communication in administrative and economic life is dominated by the Slovak language. It is not rare that Hungarian businessmen hold conversations in Slovak, because their Hungarian register does not include special expressions (Szabó-Lanstyák 2011).¹⁰ While the modern vocabulary is incomplete, the local dialect has preserved a lot of archaisms. This language habit means that the Hungarian people from Komárno are a bit different from Hungarians in Hungary (Vajda 2011). They bring their minority existence across the bridge, into a Hungarian-Hungarian context. The scholar András Vári (2002) held interviews with Hungarian labour workers coming from Slovakia to Hungary.¹¹ He pointed out that the Hungarians from Slovakia use Slovak words in situations where technical vocabulary needs to be used. Thus they cannot transfer their knowledge easily to Hungary.

FIELDS OF INTERACTIONS

The integrated twin towns mean common interactions. Simplifying the problem, we should find the motivation for why people cross the bridge. Helga Schultz made certain in her study that this motivation is first of all to shop. Leisure time, visiting relatives and undertaking a job are other reasons (Schultz 2005: 24).¹² The four fields of interaction can be graded on the bases of stability. We suppose that visiting relatives is the most stable contact, while the others depend on market circumstances (Kovács 2008: 40).

¹⁰The emancipation attempts of the Hungarian language, such as bilingual town names, signs, shop titles, or information on product packaging, has led to several political debates.

¹¹These thoughts are based on András Vári's research in the twin towns of Esztergom – Párkány/Šturovo. Although there must be certain unexplored local features, presumably Komárom/Komárno's fundamental local ethnic relations present the same mental borders.

¹²Schutz does not mention this, but cultural cooperation may be crucial. She discusses this sphere as an issue of mutual historical remembrance and institutional cooperation.

Conspicuously, personal relations are not as stable as we might think. They depend on the nature of the border, on forced and voluntary migrations and on economic differences. The study about marriage strategies in Komárno/Komárom between the two world wars shows this clearly (Kovács 2011). The study pointed out that the division of urban space in 1920 had opened a new chapter in the history of marriage strategies as well. The number of marriages between Komárom/Komárno dropped in spite of the fact that there was no language border along the Danube. Furthermore, the ethnic groups in Komárno (Slovaks, Hungarian and Jews) followed a strong endogamy after 1920. The deportation of many Hungarians after 1945 stopped the tendency for a while. The special migration diaspora in Komárom – namely people born in Komárno but who moved out in 1945 – had many relatives in the Slovakian part of the town. This diaspora was very active in establishing cultural and economic cooperation after 1970 (Bottoni 2011: 158).

A bit similar is the situation in Cieszyn/Český Těšín where the initiation of basic contacts was facilitated by the existence of family ties. Furthermore, there were also the cultural and linguistic proximities, a relatively similar level of economic status as well as the inhabitants' historical memory of the common past of both parts of the town (which, however, tends to be recollected in negative aspects, too). There are countless examples of cooperation – both on a formal, institutional, social and family platform – between the inhabitants of Cieszyn and Český Těšín, which does not mean that this coexistence is free from difficulties (Rusek 2009: 273–278).

Neither of these factors took place in the case of Zgorzelec/Görlitz. Here, few family networks existed until 1989, with a low number of mixed marriages. Nowadays, a Polish diaspora has been forming because of migration from Poles to Görlitz. This migration could partly compensate for the depopulation of the German part of the towns by 20,000 persons since the reunification of the country, so Görlitz has today only 55,000 inhabitants (Stadt Görlitz 2009: 6). In Görlitz, there are a lot of flats available and their prices and/or standards are attractive for Poles. The migration of Poles has not always been accomplished because the blocks of flats often get demolished. The authorities of Görlitz have the opinion that it is more profitable to pull down these buildings than offer them to the Polish neighbours – as was pointed out by Z. Kurcz (2007: 94). Additionally, the town offers a more developed infrastructure and even Poles admit that the German part is much more beautiful than the Polish one. At the end of 2011, there were 3,000 Poles officially registered in Görlitz (tvp.pl) – about 5% of the town's population. One may expect that this immigration minority will cultivate familiar relationships with the Polish side for a long time. Besides, this type of diaspora minority has started forming a mixed population as well. Investigations show an increasing number of German-Polish mixed marriages; as for Görlitz, in 2006 the percentage of mixed Polish-German marriages was 7% (Opitowska 2008: 11).

In spite of the mixed marriages and migration trends, generally “the inhabitants of Görlitz distance themselves from the Polish neighbours” writes Z. Kurcz (2011: 259). The materials that he has analysed indicate that this tendency dominates over aspirations towards creating a neighbourhood. Apparently, Germans mostly shop, use services or take walks in the Polish part of the town (83–95% of the inhabitants of Zgorzelec), while engaging in more interpersonal activities like going to a disco, meeting friends, participation in their Polish acquaintances' family celebrations or having common projects with Poles was reported by 10–20%, which means that the mutual contacts are quite shallow, and tend to fulfil rather practical needs (Dolińska 2011: 78–80). The percentage of Poles who go socializing in Görlitz is about 20–25% (Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2011: 58) but very few pay visits to their family or acquaintances (Buczko 2009: 175). As revealed in another research, the inhabitants of Zgorzelec value

first of all the economic rather than social dimension of the cooperation, which thus seems to be treated instrumentally by them (Makaro 2011: 44).

The non-personal contact zones are the most common spaces in Komárno/Komárom, too. Some detailed investigation about the shopping habits in this twin town is available (Sikos-Tiner 2007). It is interesting that the number of little stores was equal in both towns, although Komárno has 34,000 inhabitants while Komárom has only 19,000 (Census SK 2011, KSH Helyiségnévtár 2013). Most stores are micro businesses owned by one person or a family. The differences may have a historical background. Namely, micro enterprises have been operating in a large number in Hungary since the late 1960s (Tamáska, 2012: 92). A further factor may be the income inequality. Komárom has traditionally had larger shopping power than Komárno. The only sector where Komárno shows up an advantage is with catering services like restaurants and pubs. The clients of those services often come from the Hungarian side of the twin town (Sikos-Tiner 2007: 109).

There is no doubt that the flourishing of restaurants goes back to the beer culture of the former Czechoslovakia. This cult appears in the relationship of Cieszyn/Český Těšín, too. However, on both sides of the border one can easily find a range of shops oriented to the customers from the other side of the Olza/Olše river. Poles traditionally head for the Czech pubs and restaurants, looking for certain items of food or medicine. A relatively new purpose for a visit to the Czech Republic is smoking marijuana, which has been de-penalized there. Czechs are first of all interested in household equipment (especially furniture), clothes, articles of food or things made of wicker. It is also customary to meet Czechs enjoying the beauty of the Cieszyn market square and the atmosphere of the coffee houses there (after the split of the city, its more attractive part was given to Poland). The structure of shopping is more or less constant; what changes is rather the trade intensity which reflects the relation between the two national currencies (in recent years it has favoured the Czechs).

Almost all inhabitants of Zgorzelec who go to Görlitz (82.3%) do it for commercial purposes. What is more, 40% of them visit local shops at least once a month (Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2011: 57–58). A similar percentage of Germans and Poles visit shops at the other side of the border once a week. For Poles, the most attractive articles are clothes (e.g. shoes) or food, mostly due to their quality. When in Zgorzelec, Germans are interested in buying petrol, alcohol and cigarettes as well as using a variety of services (e.g. hairdressing, cosmetics). Germans have traditionally been more active than Poles in terms of the amount of money spent on the other side of the Nysa/Neisse River. On average, Poles spend about 177 euros a month in Görlitz, whereas Germans spend about 440 euros in Zgorzelec (wiadomosci.onet.pl). This disproportion diminishes along with the difference in the economic potential of Poles and Germans, yet nowadays this factor still plays an important role. It is noteworthy that there are more and more people speaking the neighbour's language working in the shops of not only Zgorzelec but also Görlitz.

Apart from shopping, other reasons for Poles visiting Görlitz mainly include taking walks and enjoying the town's cultural institutions (Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2011: 57–58). The latter can be associated with the idea of Zgorzelec being an uninteresting place to live – its inhabitants tend to treat it as ugly, 'incomplete' and thus unattractive (Galasińska-Rollo-Meinhof 2002: 117). Poles – regardless of the place of residence – generate a considerable part of the trade turnover in Görlitz. Their presence and activity is, however, unwelcomed by the local nationalists (also by their political wing), which leads to anti-Polish campaigns.

The reverse side of the consumption is income – the labour market and enterprises. The main question is how the border overwrites the neighbourhood of twin towns. Without the border, the historical town of Komárno, for example, should have

more economic power than its twin town Komárom, if only for its size. Due to the regional trends of national states, this disproportion is reversed. Komárno lies in the internal periphery of Slovakia, near to Bratislava but in the shade of the regional developing axis (Mezei 2008: 143; Hardi 2001: 28). On the other hand, Komárom lies in the most important axis point of Hungary: Budapest-Győr-Hegyeshalom and towards Vienna (Rechnitzer 1999). Multinational companies established businesses here soon after 1990. They attract people searching for a job, also from abroad. A very similar situation arises in the twin town of Šturovo-Esztergom, where the scholar András Vári studied the conditions of semi-migrant workers (Vári 2002). The paper describes the shaping of migrant work. It proves that the biggest international company of Esztergom wanted to solve the lack of workforce at first with the help of workers coming from East Hungary. Then they turned to the catchment region of the other side of the Danube only after unsuccessful trials of the internal recruitment.

In the other twin towns, Zgorzelec/Görlitz and Cieszyn/Český Těšín, Poles have looked for a job on the other side of the border. It is not for the unemployment rate only, but also for the more convenient procedures of setting up one's own business in Germany or the Czech Republic than in Poland. In administrative terms, Cieszyn is a part of the region of Upper Silesia but in terms of history, geography and economy it is, to a large extent, a separate body. This status was brought about in the 1990s, alongside the collapse of the local industry, when Cieszyn turned to tourism, trade and services such as culture or education. The traditionally strong local identity was further strengthened in 1999 when the town became the capital of the middle-level administrative unit (*powiat*). As pointed out by Halina Rusek, Český Těšín has lost the battle over its position in the region of the Czech part of the Teschen Silesia, and a variety of processes have contributed to the town's periphery. It is oriented to services, yet its economic status is difficult to describe (Rusek 2009: 270). The inhabitants of (not only) Cieszyn consider the transport infrastructure of Český Těšín attractive, since it offers easy train access to many Czech and Slovak destinations (including Prague, Žilina, Košice) and thus to Western and Southern Europe.

Görlitz, as an element of Germany's eastern borderland, is strongly peripheral. It has drastically depopulated, it suffers from a relatively high unemployment rate and those who decided to stay here are sometimes stereotyped as 'socially disabled'. The proximity of the border with Poland is sometimes associated with the proverbial 'middle of nowhere'. Zgorzelec's location by the border of Germany also has its drawbacks, since it can be associated with periphery – both in relation to Warsaw and Wrocław, the capital city of the Lower Urban region to which Zgorzelec belongs. However, generally speaking, the town's location is evaluated more positively than negatively by its inhabitants, especially by those who cross the border (e.g. to make use of Görlitz's municipal infrastructure and the transport possibilities it offers for people who head for Western Europe (Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak 2011: 64). The image of the town also profits from the good opinion that Poland's western borderland has as opposed to its eastern equivalent. It is noteworthy that both Zgorzelec and Cieszyn are located eastwards of their twin towns, which at least partly accounts for the direction of the traffic (westwards, i.e. off the Polish side).

CONCLUSION

The paper is based on investigations of other studies. This fact did not make a comparison easy. The different scholars use different theoretic framework and different measuring methods. Not least, the results depend very much on the year of the survey. The opening process of the border controls creates a fundamental difference within a short time; the shopping activity depends on the exchange rate; the industrial parks offer workplaces in very variable numbers. In spite of this, there are some common features in twin towns.

- The breadth of the bridge and the urban structure determine the manner and frequency of people's mobility. However, it was rare to ask about the topography of the space in which this migration is realized. We are certain that the natural topography of Komárno/Komárom make any social interaction between the both parts difficult. In the other cases, it is less the river itself than the last hundred years of urban planning that creates disintegration in the townscapes.
- The interactions in twin towns are reduced mostly to non-personal actions: shopping or taking a walk.
- For the above reason, the question had to be posed as to whether people need common urban spaces at all. From a sociological point of view we can say that the borderlines and frontier zones of the present urban places represent the mental (ethnic and language) zones of their inhabitants more or less, as well as the economic differences of both sides of the twin towns.

To summarise, it could be said that none of the twin towns represent an integrated micro-social milieu. Thus, the three places can be placed within the typology of Jan Buursink between town couples and double (twin) towns. The ethnic relations and the language barriers are the most important factors as to why both sides cannot integrate. The linguistic bridges of national minorities (Hungarian in Komárno, Polish in Český Těšín or the new Polish minority in Görlitz) cannot work flawlessly because of inter-ethnic stereotypes and spatial distances. These minority groups suffer from a cultural pressure inasmuch as their bilingual competence may become a drawback.

Our own suggestion is that the integration process should pay more attention to fundamental facts like historical heritage, topography, language borders or economic background. An efficient integration process has to accept those fundamentals. The barriers between both sides are not to be taken away. At the same time, a frontier zone between twin towns also exists today and it can be further developed along the riverbank area. An efficient urban planning of the river zone as a common green zone is the key action not only for the townscape but an important step for the integration of local societies, as well.

FIGURES

Fig.1. River, bridges, historical town, railway and green zones in the topography of divided twin towns. The dimension of the Danube at Komárom/Komárno is not in relation to the other cases. The green zones and rivers function today mostly as barriers but careful landscape planning may develop common parks and relaxation zones for populations from both sides of the twin towns.

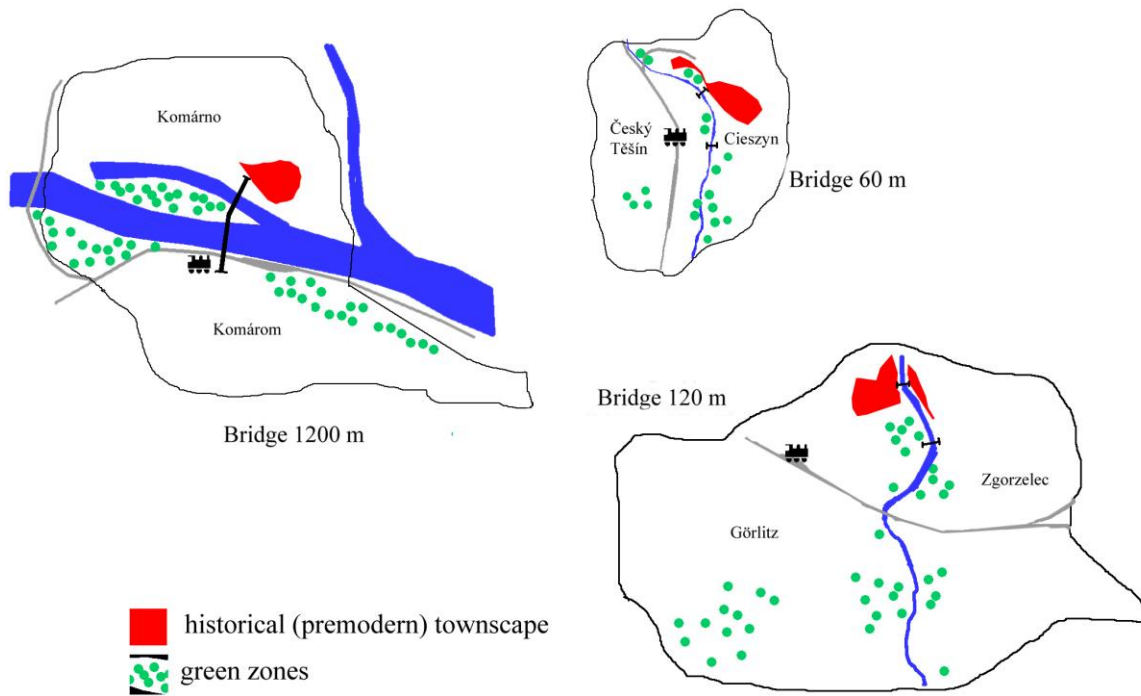


Fig.2. The bridge of Český Těšín/Cieszyn has no characteristic form. It looks as if it could be part of the street line. In fact, it is a vital contact between the two sides.



Fig.3.The rebuilt bridge (2003/2004) of Göritz/Zgorzelec is a perfect solution for historical landscape rehabilitation. The reunited old town district is a bit apart from the everyday life of both twin towns. It offers space mostly for tourist and cultural activities.



Fig.4.The bridge of Komárno/Komárom is a standalone unit in the townscape. It takes 10–15 minutes to cross it above a dockyard, Elisabeth-island, the Danube and railway station. However the lively traffic (generated mostly by local cars) makes this “promenade” less attractive.



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FROM PEOPLE TO POWER

HOW DO POLITICIANS REPRESENT THEIR RECRUITMENT INTO PARLIAMENT?

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

ABSTRACT

The literature of transitology has already reviewed the way in which former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe succeeded in joining the capitalist world order (Ágh 1993, Bielasiak 1997, 2002; Birch 2003). It has described the political processes and their effects (e.g. the rebirth and transformation of party systems, the development of civil societies and the electoral systems). However, studies published in the past 20 years have not paid sufficient attention to the picture that the parties and their members paint of themselves when it comes to their recruitment into party politics. Following Olson's approach, our study draws attention to parliamentarians as 'the human dimension of legislatures' that are particularly visible in CEE countries (Olson 1994: 13).

In our study, we investigate MPs from the four Visegrad countries: Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. Instead of using surveys or questionnaires, we only used publicly available data: the websites of the parliaments and statistic offices, the parties, and the MPs themselves. We were interested in the different representations that MPs construct about their "first contact" with party politics to the voters.

The rich literature of party recruitment and the discipline of elite studies came to the conclusion that the parties of the new democracies of the region are concentrating on the elections and the mobilization of their voters, not on the continuous recruitment of new members. Then, how do the MPs join the political parties, what kind of channels are available to them and how do they represent themselves in their publicly available CVs?

In the first part of our paper, we present the methodology; in the second, our hypotheses; and in the third, the findings of our research. At the end of the paper, we identify the next steps that are necessary to further develop our theories in a future research.

Key words

V4 countries, political recruitment, Members of the Parliament, transparency

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Introduction

On the basis of geographical proximity and similarities in the social and political frameworks, our research examines the recruitment of national representatives of the so-called Visegrad states: Hungary, Poland, the Czech and the Slovak Republic.

The literature of party recruitment, i.e. the renewal of MPs and party members in comparative perspective, is rich (Cotta & Best, 2000; Best, 2007). Political parties play an especially important role in this process concerning the parliamentary elites in Central and Eastern Europe, since they have established themselves as an important selector for parliamentary and cabinet offices in many CEE countries. Changes in the electoral systems in many of these countries have increased the importance of parties and made it more difficult for independents to run for legislative positions. (Semenova–Edinger–Best 2013: 29).

Since members of parliament are recruited and selected by parties, we seek to identify the sources of parliamentarians' profile in the party context – as Putnam claims, after all, it is recruitment that influences the features of the given elite group the most (Putnam 1976: 47). Most political parties have maintained party youth organizations that act as political training grounds since the time of parties with mass memberships in Western Europe (Stolle–Hooghe 2005). However, political parties do not rely only on their youth organizations for the recruitment of their MPs. We will later show that youth organizations are only one – and not even the most widely spread – channel. Parties maintain connections to civil movements, they employ experts in every policy field, pay attention to minority groups, use the fame of singers and TV personalities, and even look back to before 1989 to utilize the decades of political experience of former communist party members. However, the proportions of the usage of these channels are different in each party and they are especially variable in different countries.

The Visegrad states are similar in various ways. The party development of the region missed 40 years because of the forced socialist system.³ Democracy and parliamentary elections were on hold; society did not have the means to freely form interest or political groups. After 1989, however, the four states have all established parliamentary systems, have not been exposed to substantial ethnic conflict, and have been classified by Freedom House as consolidated democracies for many years. Having the same cultural roots, similar economic backgrounds and more or less the same future plans in 1991, each of the four countries declared their common aims with regional cooperation under the Visegrad Group–V4. Furthermore, these countries are all unitary states and share strong historical ties to Western Europe and became members of the European Union in 2004.

There are also similarities concerning party politics in the region. Since 1989, new parties emerged in the Visegrad countries and old ones were reformed. These new political parties required members to participate in the elections as candidates, to mobilize voters and in the day-to-day activities of the party as well. The party recruitment patterns were initially ad hoc, but soon stabilized in the countries of the region (Ilonszki–Schwarz 2013: 57). Parliamentarians in the Visegrad countries have been the most professionalized: upon their entry into parliament, MPs usually had leadership experience in local offices and within their political parties. Among these parliamentarians, the proportion of MPs recruited from political parties is higher than the CEE average (Semenova–Edinger–Best 2013: 296).

³ Within the People's Republic of Poland, alongside the Polish United Workers' Party, there existed two communist-controlled parties: the Democratic Party and United People's Party. But since there was no democratic competition among these parties, there was no chance for democratic party development.

Based on the abovementioned factors, the four cases are apparently quite similar. Therefore, we can assume that there might be similarities in the career path of an MP.

However, the electoral systems of the Visegrad countries differ: there can be found one mixed-member electoral system (Hungary)⁴ and three proportional systems (Poland,⁵ the Czech and Slovak Republics). Although the latter are all closed-list cases, preference voting is enabled in the Czech and Slovak Republics.⁶ Since the electoral system is one of the most influential factors behind the different career pathways of politicians, this might lead to differences.

MPs elected under SMD (single-member district) majority rules are more district-oriented and candidates have more opportunities to conduct individualized campaigns than those elected in party-list proportional (PR) systems. Concerning mixed electoral systems, Zittel (2008) found that in the case of Germany, the mode of candidacy matters to a surprising extent, because of the contamination effects between the first and the second tiers of the electoral system. Due to these contamination effects recent research on the Hungarian electoral system (Papp 2013) has shown that because of the party-centeredness of the system - not as the consequence of individual decisions, but as the manifestation of party strategies - personal representation appear as part of the overall party strategy. In single-member constituencies a given party might favour candidates that have started their career outside the political party for some reasons (e.g. a well-known local personality might increase the number of the votes). Therefore, we suggest that despite the fact that the recruitment is strongly influenced by Hungarian party control, we will find the greatest number of individual characteristics of self-representation of MPs in the Hungarian case. In PR systems, district magnitude – defined as the number of legislators elected from a district – is a relevant variable that differs in all selected countries. As for the type of lists in *closed lists*, the order of election of candidates from a given party in a multi-seat district is determined by a party-provided rank. When the list is closed, there is no intraparty competition. Following the results of former research (Shugart et al. 2005:439) we expect that these two variables interact to affect the extent to which voters demand information about the personal attributes of legislators and legislative candidates. We assume that parties have strong control over the selection of candidates and career routes of MPs and therefore, most MPs start their political career within political parties. We expect the fewest initiatives for individual career paths outside political parties to be found in Poland. This

⁴The Hungarian electoral system is of a mixed type: it distributes 386 mandates on two principles and into three branches. The considerable role of the single-member districts in the electoral results is a widely noticed feature of the Hungarian voting system. 45.6% of the representatives come from one of the 176 single-member constituencies. In principle, according to the logic of territorial representation, voters vote for people, not parties. Similar to Western-European countries, the Hungarian election campaign is ruled by political parties (Körösényi–Tóth–Török, 2009).

⁵According to the Constitution, the Sejm is composed of 460 Deputies chosen for a four-year term of office and there are 100 Senators. Poland has a multi-party proportional representation system. There are 41 constituencies in Poland, each allotted between 7 and 19 seats. Each constituency provides a candidate list and members of that district vote on the candidates they want to elect. Parties win seats according to the aggregate vote for their candidates in a constituency and then allocate them to those with highest totals.

⁶Although in June 1990, the Czech and Slovak electoral systems were very similar, the Slovak variant was almost identical to the semi-open list PR system, with large district magnitudes and party thresholds. Since 1990, there have been several amendments to this system in both the Czech and the Slovak Republics. In the Czech Republic, the election system to the Chamber of Deputies is characterized today by multi-mandate constituencies; the number of mandates for one constituency is calculated proportionately according to the number of valid votes in the constituency. Voters have the opportunity to vote for competing party lists with the possibility of preference-voting for candidates within the list (Mánsfeldová 2013: 36). In the Slovak Republic, the most notable change was the introduction of a single nationwide constituency replacing four regional districts in 1998. Preference voting is neutralized by the single district, as the application of the existing formula to such a large area made it practically impossible for any but the already most prominent figures to move up the candidate list (Birch et al. 2002: 76). Each voter may, in addition to the party, select one to four candidates from the ordered party list. Candidates who are selected by more than 3% of the party's voters are elected. Each voter can cast four preferential votes for candidates with respect to the same list. Vacancies arising between general elections are filled by substitutes chosen at the same time as titular members.

proportion is expected to be higher in the Slovak and the Czech Republic, where voters can express their preferences for candidates.

The four cases are apparently quite similar, and yet they might demonstrate surprisingly different outcomes in career paths of MPs. The hope is that intensive study of the available recruitment channels might reveal one – or at most several – factors that differ across these cases.

Our research focuses rather on the career paths or self-presentation of MPs than recruitment per se. Our question is: what do MPs emphasize concerning the beginning of their political careers? What is reflected in their curricula vitae that is presumably written for the voters and posted on the webpage of parliaments, or their personal websites, when they are creating a picture of themselves? In these texts, we expect to find their motivation for entering politics and the way in which they became members of their parties. Our paper identifies these ways and compares them in each country, meanwhile showing the differences among the parties as well. At this point, we must emphasize that our research is only focusing on the CVs of MPs; therefore, we expect different results from previous studies. CVs, as with all texts created by politicians, are subject to the goals of politicians: they want to influence or reassure their voters, create credibility in their policies, and paint a trustworthy picture of themselves. The current state of our research on the recruitment channels and self-representation of the members of parliament of the Visegrad countries only allows us a descriptive paper. However, we believe that we have been able to identify the different recruitment channels and shed some light on the topic, which will allow us to investigate it further.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Our first hypothesis is that despite the similarities of the four Visegrad countries, we will find some differences in the self-presentation of first contact points with politics as indicated in the introduction.

Our second hypothesis relates to the 2008 global economic crisis. We are anticipating a certain kind of depoliticization which is reflected and could be detected in the CVs of the MPs. In times of social, political, and especially economical difficulties, all politicians agree that a solution must be found as quickly as possible, and that this solution has to come from “experts”, not politicians. Most policy questions that are otherwise open for political debate in normal circumstances (e.g. raising taxes, cutting social care), are characterized in the statements of governing and opposing politicians alike as strictly professional questions; however, these issues remain political in nature, and depoliticization could lead to diminishing democratic content (for a review see Flinders–Buller 2006). Drawing on the research of Steven Kettel (2008) we propose testing the extent of depoliticization in the self-representation of MPs in the Visegrad countries before and after the economic crisis. We expect to find different (i.e. depoliticized) first contact points in their publicly available CVs in the elections of 2010 and 2011 and at higher ratios than in earlier times (i.e. before the economic crisis).

In order to test our hypothesis, we have chosen the last three parliamentary elections⁷ within the four countries, and we have only researched the winning parties, since winning parties (i.e. parties in government) necessitate the recruitment of members on a larger scale, making their recruitment channels more visible to the laymen and the researcher alike. Our choice of

⁷ Hungary: 2002, 2006, 2010. Poland: 2005, 2007, 2011. Czech Republic: 2006, 2010, 2013. Slovak Republic: 2006, 2010, 2012.

elections was based on our hypothesis, a kind of depoliticization of parties and different roles of politicians to emerge relating to the economic crisis of 2008–2009. We analyze the cumulative data of all four countries in all three elections. We will present our data proportionally, for the parliaments of each country have a different number of seats; furthermore, we have limited our research to the winning parties only, with a varying number of mandates won in each election.

We will accept our second hypothesis if we find a higher proportion of depoliticized first contact points in the CVs of the MPs in a cumulative data setting in the second group of elections (i.e. 2010 in Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republics, and 2011 in Poland) compared to the first group of elections (i.e. 2006 in Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republics, and 2005 and 2007 in Poland).

METHODOLOGY

The data was collected between December 1, 2013 and January 22, 2014. The primary sources of information were parliament websites for the CVs of the elected MPs. This model has functioned well for the Hungarian⁸ and Polish⁹ case, since all the CVs of the MPs are published by the *Országgyűlés* and the *Sejm*. However, these data were not published by the parliaments in the Czech and Slovak Republics; therefore, we used websites of civic organizations¹⁰ with the goal of promoting transparency. They have published the CVs of both Czech and Slovak MPs, however, as additional data source websites of the MPs and their parties were also used if no information was available about the curriculum of a politician.

It is unfortunate that we were not able to use similar data sources in all Visegrad countries (i.e. the websites of parliaments) and it might raise some questions as to the comparability of the results. However, we were interested in the publicly available CVs; therefore, we chose the data-collection method available to the voters as well. In all four CEE countries, it is mandatory for MPs to submit a curriculum vitae to the archive of parliament when winning a mandate; however, the Czech and the Slovak parliamentary archives did not make these CVs public on their websites. They are, however, available in paper format in the archives themselves, making them available to the public in theory but cumbersome to access. As our hypothesis relates not only to the self-representation of members of parliament but to the picture they paint of themselves for the public, we chose to use the more accessible CVs.

Our database contains the last three parliamentary elections of the Visegrad countries, 23 parties¹¹ and 1,952 MPs.¹² The table below shows the parties analyzed in our research and the election years as well.

⁸ <http://www.parlament.hu>

⁹ <http://sejm.gov.pl>

¹⁰ Czech Republic: <http://www.nasipolitici.cz>, Slovak Republic: <http://www.osobnosti.sk>.

¹¹ Hungary: 4, Poland: 5, Czech Republic: 7, Slovak Republic: 7.

¹² Hungary: 678, Poland: 696, Czech Republic: 331, Slovak Republic: 247.

Table 1. The parties in the database.

Parties Country			1 st time group		2 nd time group			
	2002	2005	2006	2007	2010	2011	2012	2013
Hungary	MSZP, SZDSZ		MSZP, SZDSZ		Fidesz, KDNP			
Poland		SRP, PiS, LPR		PSL, PO		PSL, PO		
Czech Republic	SZ, ODS, KDU-CSL				ODS, TOP09, VV			CSSD, ANO, KDU
Slovak Republic			SMER, ĽS – HZDS, SNS		MOST- HÍD, KDH, SaS, SDKÚ – DS		SMER	

As mentioned before, only the winning parties were selected for our research. The timeframe of our database (2002–2013) necessitated a distinction in the case of the upper houses of the Polish and the Czech parliaments. In the case of Poland and the Czech Republic, we did not include the senators (i.e. the members of the upper houses the *Senat* and the *Senát*).

We have chosen the most recent elections that are comparable in all four Visegrad countries. This means that the economic crisis happened in the middle of mandates of all Visegrad countries; therefore, the same amount of time was available to all politicians to react to the event, and furthermore, all parliaments have fulfilled their mandate with the exception of Poland. The current stage of our research only allows us to compare the CVs of MPs in the two aforementioned elections, thus making our paper rather descriptive. However, we believe that with our innovative approach to the study of representation, we have been able to open a very interesting avenue of research.

Unlike former research into the political elite of the selected countries (Semenova–Edinger–Best 2013) our research did not gather data directly from MPs or from different parliamentary groups, but focused on the public relations of the MPs as individuals, namely on the way how they represent themselves towards the public. Regarding the recruitment of the MPs, we focused on the question of how they formulated their CVs, and what they emphasize when they write about the beginning of their political career. This might cause differences compared to research into the political elite, since CVs are often “edited” by political parties for ideological reasons. Regarding recruitment, one typical issue is that candidates of right-wing parties hide their affiliation to the former state parties (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, and Polish United Workers Party). Nevertheless, how these CVs are constructed adds important information about the representation of the political elite of the selected countries.

Since we gathered information about the self-representation of career paths of MPs, we coded what they mentioned as the first step of their political career. We did not formulate our categories beforehand to maximize flexibility. However, shortly after the coding began, the following categories emerged. It has to be noted here, that at this phase of our research, our categories are mutually exclusive (i.e. we coded the CVs of the MPs with only one category).

1. *Founder of the party*: those MPs who emphasized that they have belonged to the given party since its beginning and were active in its formation. We can differentiate two types of politicians who have been coded to this group. The first are seasoned politicians who have been active since the 1990s; the second are the latecomers who have founded new and successful political parties in response to various social, political, and economic challenges.

2. *Party member*: if the MP has emphasized the fact that his or her political career started within the political party (e.g. joined the local division) that nominated him or her as candidate for the elections. The majority of the cases fell into this category, since party loyalty is experienced and enforced on a daily basis in these party systems. A high ratio of party members signifies a kind of loyalty to the political party: in extreme perception, rendering, the past of the MP null and void before joining the party; in a milder wording, making it insignificant.

3. *Youth organization*: we distinguished those party members who mentioned that they started their career within the youth section of the party they represented in the parliaments. We have also coded into this category those who have indicated the start of their political career in any of the communist youth organizations. This could be seen problematic, as membership of communist youth organizations are construed as meaningless, and it was in some cases compulsory; however, we have only coded MPs to this category if they have expressively mentioned their membership to the youth division of communist parties.

4. *Other party members*: we coded into this category those MPs who mentioned that their political career started in another political party, but has left in order to be nominated by their current party. From the party perspective, this could mean a kind of inclusivity and reception toward members of other parties; meanwhile, from the view point of the politician, it could mean a professionalization that makes the candidacy itself more important than party membership (e.g. in the Hungarian case, we find several former FKgP [Independent Smallholders' Party] MPs joining the Christian Democrats or Fidesz).

5. *Local politics*: if the MP started his or her career at the municipal level (e.g. was elected as municipal deputy or became mayor of a settlement) and became member of a political party and national politics later. The literature suggests that that local roots and electoral experience are generally valuable, and it extends these notions by arguing that the value of such attributes varies systematically with the extent to which electoral rules generate a demand by voters for locally committed legislators (Shugart, 1995: 438.). Drawing on the work of Valdini (2005), we argue that voters demand different kinds of information about their potential agents of representation under different electoral rules.

6. *Communist Party*: we have coded the MPs into this category if they have indicated in their CVs their former membership to the communist parties of the region. We will see significant differences between the Visegrad countries; the reason for this difference might be explained partly by legal obligations. While in the Czech Republic, the Constitutional Court has declared that former membership of the Communist Party has to be indicated by the candidates, there is no such obligation in the other three countries. However, members of the Hungarian party MSZP have been declaring their former state party membership at very high ratios (i.e. in the 2002 data, 50% of their MPs fell into this category); meanwhile, in the case of the Czech Republic, we find no successor party in coalition after the Velvet Revolution.

7. *Civil movement*: those MPs who emphasized that they started their career outside of political parties, however, mentioned their political activity in regard to different political issues. We have also coded into this category those MPs who

started their career in a political movement (e.g. Solidarnosc in Poland), or in a movement that emphasized its distance from established political parties (e.g. ANO 2011 in the Czech Republic) before becoming a party themselves and entering parliament.

8. *Expert*: MPs emphasizing their expertise in a certain field fell into this category (i.e. economists, medical doctors, university and academic researchers). These professionals are working with political parties in think tanks or other institutions, and for their continuous support they might receive parliamentary seats.

9. *Minority*: certain MPs concentrate on representing a minority group and usually they belong to them as well. In their CVs, they indicate that they represent especially the interests of these minority groups, and did so before joining a political party and becoming MPs. We did not code into this category the MPs of explicit minority parties automatically (e.g. MOST-HÍD of the Slovak Republic) because we were researching the different recruitment channels as represented in the CVs, not the characteristics of the parties themselves.

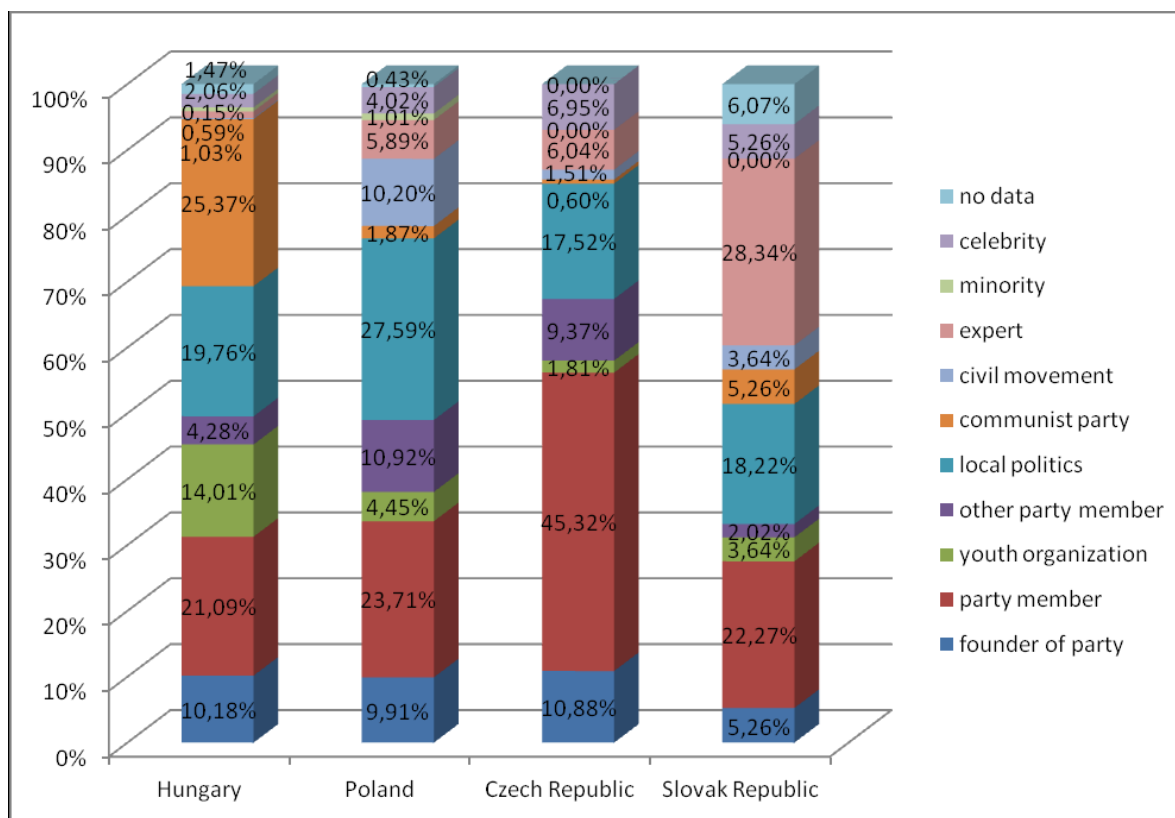
10. *Celebrity*: we differentiated party politicians who became MPs because they were celebrities (e.g. actors, singers, writers, sportsmen); their CV focused on emphasizing these features.

11. *No data available*: in some cases, we were unable to find sufficient data on the MPs about their curriculum, and how they came to be MPs. These few cases are very interesting, since we are talking about public figures at the highest level of politics. Further research is proposed on these MPs and their parties, related to transparency.

RESULTS

First, we tested trends among the Visegrad states as to the way their politicians represent the process of how they became part of the political elite (i.e. members of parliament). Do the parliamentary elites of Hungary, Poland, the Czech and the Slovak Republics mirror the same proportion of recruitment channels or not? Firstly, we present the cumulative data for each country.

Figure 1. Cumulative data of the Visegrad countries. N=1952.



Source: own calculation

FIRST CONTACT WITH PARTY POLITICS

As for the availability of data on the CVs of MPs, information on every politician was accessible in Poland and Czech Republic. In Hungary, no reliable information was provided by 2% of the sample, while the most difficult task was to find data on Slovak politicians, and 6% of the sample could not be tested.

The highest proportion of MPs reporting on the beginning of their political career within political parties can be found in Hungary, while our results indicate the lowest results in the Slovak case.

Affiliation to the Communist Party of the former regime is most reflected in Hungarian politicians (25%) since the MPs of the successor party of the socialist state party (MSZP) indicate their affiliation and the party had great share in the parliamentary seats in 2002 and 2006. The proportion is much lower in Slovakia (5%) and in Poland (2%) and almost zero in the Czech Republic.

Starting a political career within the same party that nominated a given MP is often mentioned by MPs of the Visegrad countries, justifying the claim that party context is the recruitment method that influences the features of the given elite group the most. Almost half (45%) of the Czech political elite comes from the party context, while in the other three countries, this proportion is significantly lower (21–24%).

Being a party founder is indicated by 10% of MPs in Poland, Hungary and in the Czech Republic, while it is less frequent in Slovakia (5%).

The highest proportion of young politicians getting a head start in politics via youth organizations was detected among Hungarian MPs (14%). These organizations have significantly less importance in the other countries of the region (2–4%).

Although the party system underwent significant changes in all countries, the CVs of MPs reflect little on the fact that their political career started in another political party in Slovakia (2%) and in Hungary (4%). It is reflected more in the Czech Republic (9%) and 11% of Polish MPs mention it.

Our results confirm the importance of political parties to MPs with regard to political recruitment in the region. Only a small minority of MPs start their careers outside political parties. The highest proportion can be found in Slovakia and Poland.

As for political careers outside political parties, local politics serves as a key channel for the selection of MPs within the region. The proportion is the highest in Poland (28%), while in the other three countries, approximately one fifth of MPs mention this form as their first politics-related role (18–20%).

Emphasizing their expertise in working with political parties or in think tanks or other support institutions of political parties before entering parliament is the most reflected form in Slovakia (29%). The proportion of experts is 6 percent in Poland and in the Czech Republic, while it is not a significant feature of Hungarian politicians (1%) at all.

The role of political movements is reflected by high number of MPs in Poland (10%), most of them referring to their role within the Solidarnosc movement. Czech and Slovak politicians refer to such origins at a much lower proportion (2–4%), while according to their CVs, movements seem to have had little influence on the careers of Hungarian politicians.

Famous personalities can help to increase public support to political parties and make them more attractive for voters. The share of those famous personalities who get seats as MPs is highest in the Czech Republic (7%), around 5% in Poland and Slovakia, while their number is not significant in Hungary (2%).

The proportion of politicians mentioning activity in issues for ethnic minorities as their recruitment channel is almost zero among Czech and Slovakian politicians, and it is not significantly higher in Hungary or Poland¹³ either (1%).

Although we have expected that, given the mixed electoral system, Hungarian parties might favour candidates that started their career outside the political party, Hungarian party control proved to be stronger than expected, and we have found fewer individual characteristics of self-representation of MPs in the Hungarian case: more than 90% of MPs reported having

¹³ However, in Poland, the data reflect the importance of the Kashubian minority movement, since almost all politicians who mentioned minority issues indicated their engagement to the Kashubian language in their CVs, while no similar trend could be detected in any other case.

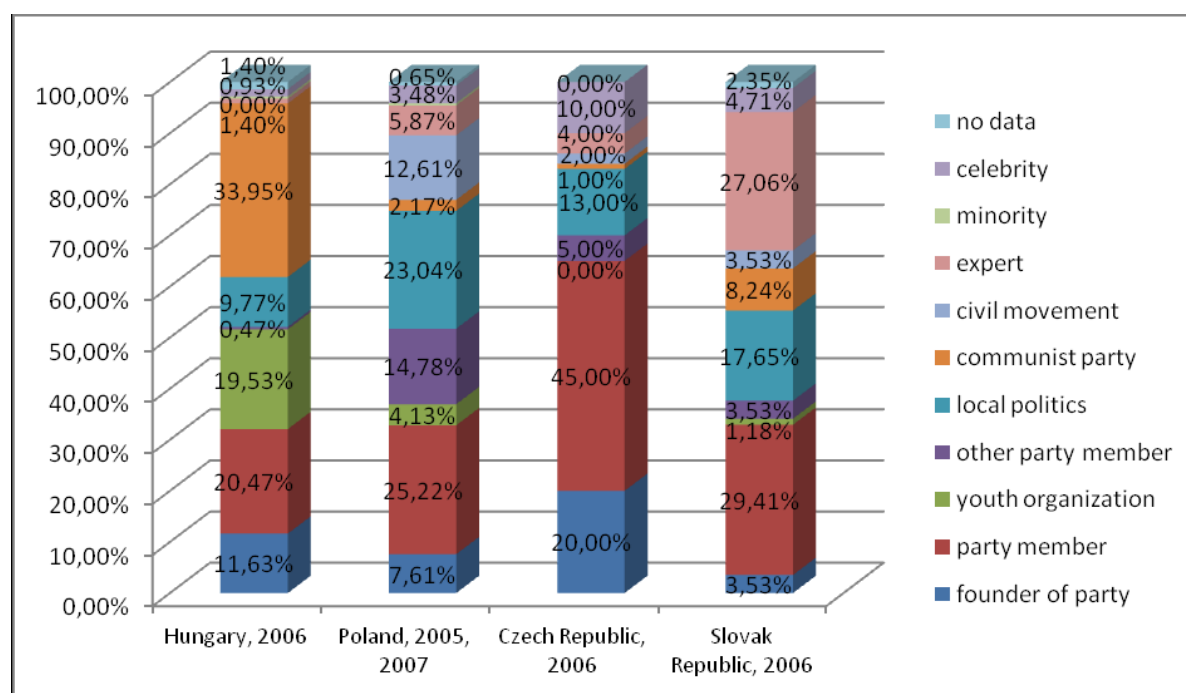
started their political career in political parties. Our results indicate that the most initiatives for individual career paths outside political parties are to be found in the Slovak Republic, and that this could be the result of voters being able to express their preferences for candidates.

FIRST TIME GROUP

After reviewing all four countries from a cumulative perspective, we continue to test our second hypothesis (i.e. the differences and similarities of the CVs of the MPs related to the date of elections). In this part of our paper, we will first show our results in two groups: firstly, the elections of 2005 (Poland), 2006 (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic), and 2007 (Poland); secondly, the elections of 2010 (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic) and 2011 (Poland). We have weighted the cases of Poland in the first time group, as they contained two elections instead of one.

The following figure shows the results from a national perspective, making the characteristics of each country visible.

Figure 2. Data for elections in 2005, 2006, 2007.
N=860 (Hungary: 215, Poland: 460, Czech Republic: 100, Slovak Republic: 85)



Source: own calculation.

The proportion of MPs who emphasized that they are founders of party was the highest in the case of the Czech Republic, with 20%. This is much higher than in the other Visegrad countries; in second place is Hungary with the proportion of 11.6%, followed by Poland (7.6%) and the Slovak Republic (3.53%).

The Czech MPs mentioned their party memberships in the highest proportions as well, with 45% of the cases. We find party membership less emphatic in the case of the Slovak Republic (29.4%), Poland (25.2%) and Hungary (20.4%). As mentioned before, political parties hold key positions when entering politics in the region, therefore, it is not surprising that this category contained the highest ratios of MPs, except for Hungary, where it was preceded by former Communist Party membership.

As we mentioned before in the introduction of our paper, it is evident from our database that political youth organizations are not the most widely emphasized first contact points with national politics. This category has the highest ratio in Hungary (19.5%), but this can be explained by the bigger coalition party, the successor of the Hungarian Worker's Party, MSZP. The MPs of this party had a standardized CV template in 2006 and 2010, and all of the MPs old enough have mentioned their relation to either socialist youth organizations or the socialist Worker's Party. Hungary is followed by Poland, with a considerably smaller proportion (4.1%) and the Slovak Republic (1.1%), while no MPs mentioned relations with any youth organization in the Czech Republic.

Membership of other parties was most emphasized by MPs from Poland (14.7%), a three times higher ratio than the Czech (5%), Slovak (3.5%) and Hungarian MPs.

Having come from local politics was most emphatic in the case of Polish MPs, as well (23%), followed by the Slovak (17.6%), the Czech (13%) and finally the Hungarian (9.7%) cases.

As mentioned before, Communist Party membership was very well articulated in the CVs of Hungarian MPs: a third of them mentioned a former commitment (33.9%), while this first contact point was emphasized significantly less by the other three Visegrad countries (i.e. 8.2% of the Slovak, 2.1% of the Polish and only 1% of the Czech cases).

Proportions of involvement in various civil movements was the highest in the case of Poland yet again (12.6%) followed by 3.5% in the Slovak Republic, and 2% in the Czech Republic. In the case of Hungary, we only found MPs who mentioned various activities in civil movements or charitable foundations after joining their political parties.

The ratio of experts is very high in the Slovak Republic compared to the other three CEE countries (i.e. 27%), while in Poland it is 5.8%, in the Czech Republic 4% and in Hungary only 0.9%.

Emphasizing minority groups and also belonging to them is rather under-articulated in the Visegrad countries: only three MPs (two Polish and one Hungarian) mentioned minority advocacy groups as their first step towards party politics, making this category the least represented in our database.

It seems that being a famous person or a celebrity is a more emphasized gateway to politics, especially in the case of the Czech Republic where 10% of the MPs mentioned this in their CVs. This proportion is followed by the Slovak Republic (4.7%), Poland (3.4%), and finally, Hungary (1.4%).

We found no difference on missing data in the four Visegrad countries. In the Czech case, there were no missing CVs; meanwhile this ratio was the highest in the Slovak Republic. However, in only 23% of the cases was no data available.

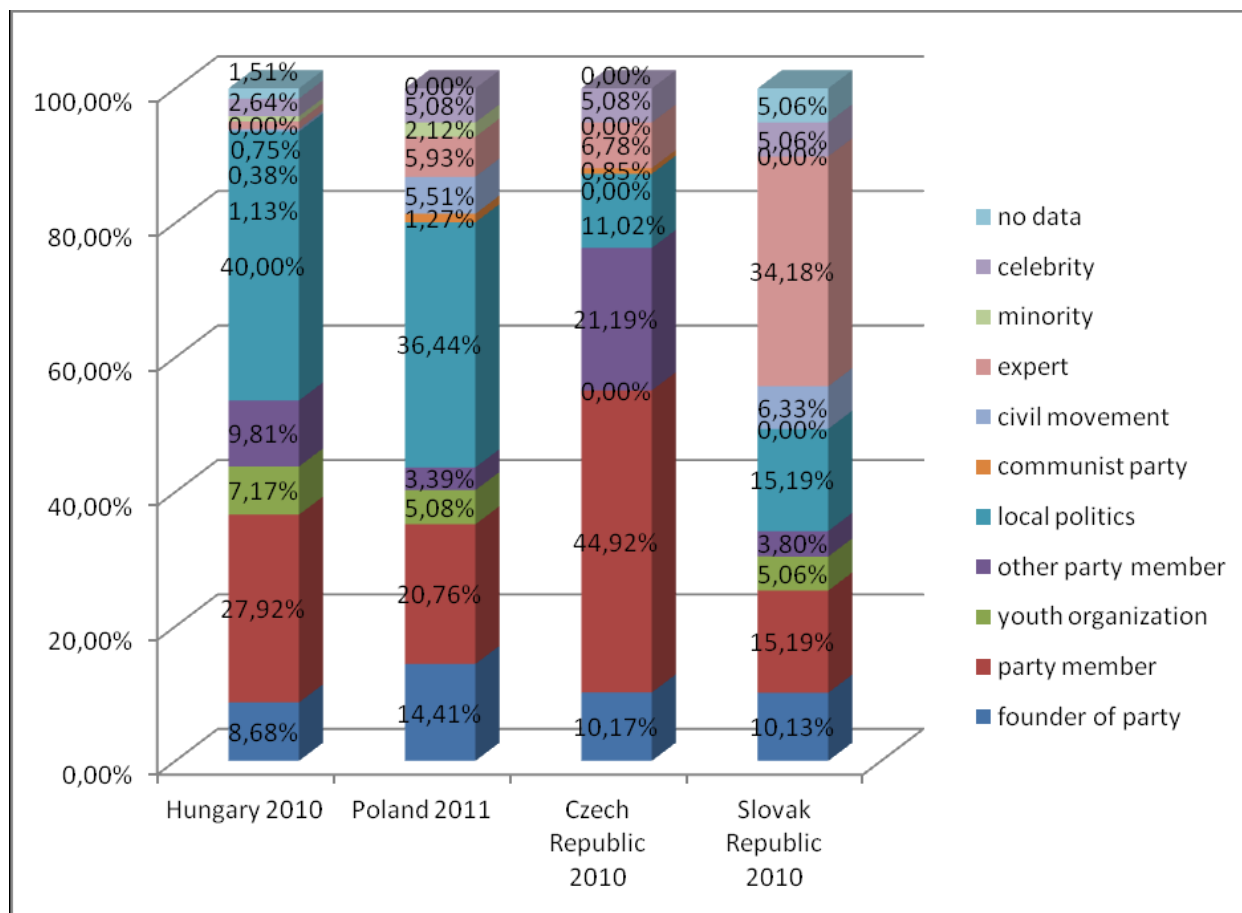
After the first descriptive part of our results, we will continue with our second time group: the Polish elections of 2010 and 2011.

SECOND TIME GROUP

The next figure shows the characteristics of each country, making the differences visible at the national level.

Figure 3. Data from elections: 2010 and 2011.

N=698 (Hungary: 265, Poland: 236, Czech Republic: 118, Slovak Republic: 79).



Source: own calculation.

The proportion of MPs who emphasize being founders of parties as their first contact point with politics has decreased in all Visegrad countries with the exception of the Slovak Republic, where we detected an almost 7% increase (from 3.5% to 10.1%). Overall, this coincides with our expectations.

In accordance with our second hypothesis, the ratio of MPs in the category of party members decreased in Poland (from 25.2% to 20.7%) and the Slovak Republic (from 29.4% to 15.1%). However, they increased in Hungary (from 20.4% to 27.9%), and stayed almost the same in the Czech Republic (45% compared to 44.9%).

Our results are also mixed in the case of the ratios of the group of political youth organizations. The proportions decreased in Hungary (a significant change from 19.5% to 7.1%), stayed virtually zero in the Czech Republic, meanwhile increased in Poland (from 4.1% to 5%) and the Slovak Republic (from 1.1% to 5%).

The ratio of other party members decreased in Poland (from 14.7% to 3.3%), stayed the same in the case of the Slovak MPs and increased in Hungary (from 0.4% to 9.8%) and the Czech Republic (from 5% to 21.1% – a robust change).

We have found the most significant change to be in the category of local politics. In Hungary, their proportion increased from 9.7% to 40%, in Poland from 23% to 36.4%; meanwhile, we detected a 2% decrease in the case of the Czech and Slovak Republics.

Former Communist Party membership as a first contact point with politics has virtually vanished from our second time group, which coincides with our second hypothesis: we found four MPs (one in the Czech Republic and three in Poland) from a total of 698 that emphasized this in their CVs.

We found no changes in the category of civil movements in Hungary and the Czech Republic, as they mentioned only in a few cases; meanwhile the ratio of this group increased in Poland (from 5.5% to 12.6%) and in the Slovak Republic (from 3.5% to 6.3%), coinciding with our hypothesis as well.

Verifying our hypothesis, we detected an increase in the ratio of MPs with the first contact point to politics as experts in Hungary (non-significantly from 0.9% to 1.1%), the Czech Republic (from 4% to 5.9%) and a further increase in the already high proportions in the Slovak Republic from 27% to 34.1%, while there are virtually no changes in Poland (5.8% to 5.9%).

In the category of minorities, we notice no definite trends: a slight increase in Hungary, a non-significant decrease in Poland, and no changes in the CVs of the MPs of the Czech and the Slovak Republic.

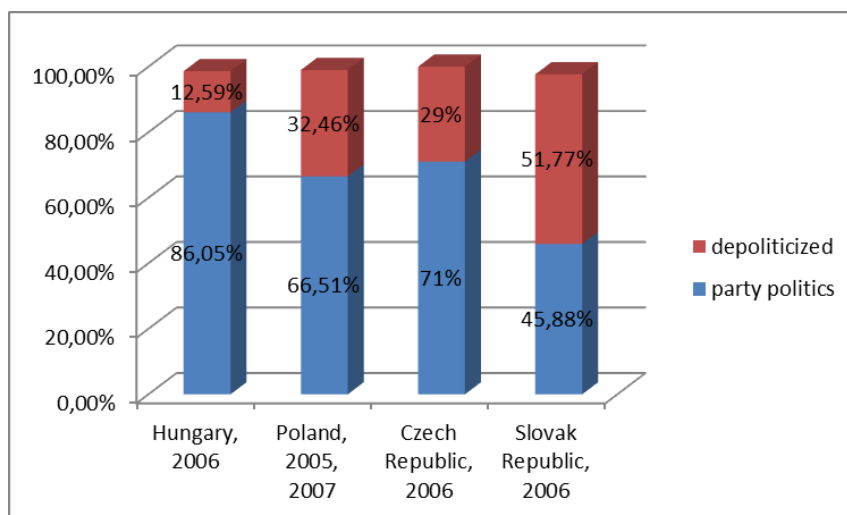
We have mostly verified our second hypothesis with the increase of proportions in the case of celebrities in Hungary (1.4% to 2.6%), the Slovak Republic (4.7% to 5%), and Poland (3.4% to 5%); however, we found a decrease in the Czech Republic (10% to 5%).

There are no significant changes in data availability of the Visegrad countries after the elections of 2010 and 2011, although in the case of the Slovak Republic the proportion of missing data is relatively high: 5%.

DEPOLITICIZED VS. PARTY POLITICS

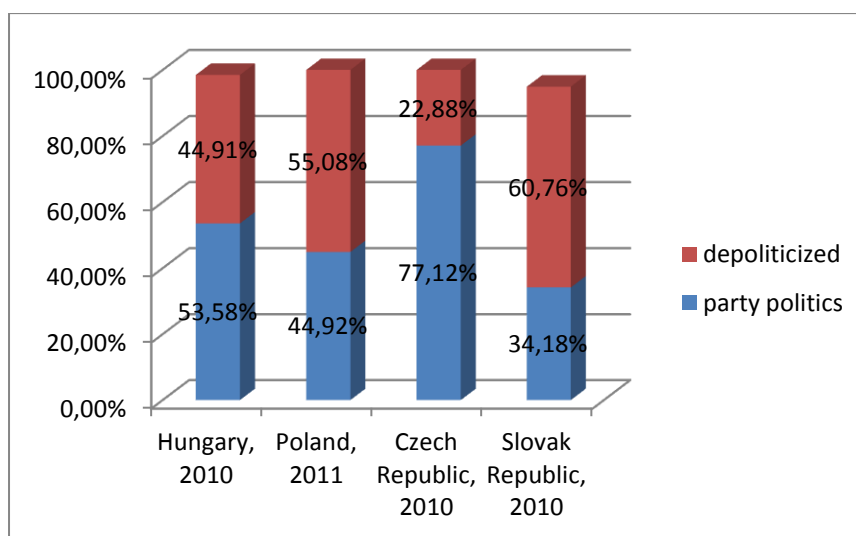
After these mixed results, we will show our results in the figures below cumulatively by our two main groups (i.e. depoliticized and party politics first contact points). In the party politics group, we have included the following categories: 1) founder of party; 2) party member; 3) youth organization; 4) other party member; and 5) Communist Party. In the depoliticized group, we have included the following categories: 1) local politics; 2) civil movement; 3) expert; 4) minority; and 5) celebrity.

Figure 4. Proportions of depoliticized and party politics, 2005, 2006, 2007.



In the election years of 2005, 2006, and 2007, we found that the highest ratio of party politics was in Hungary, followed by the Czech Republic, Poland, and the Slovak Republic respectively. Our second hypothesis suggests that these results would have changed significantly after the global economic crisis. The next figure shows our results for these elections.

Figure 5. Proportions of depoliticized and party politics, 2010, 2011.



Our hypothesis proved to be correct in three Visegrad countries out of four. The ratio of depoliticized first contact points with politics increased significantly in all countries, with the exception of the Czech Republic, where we detected a slight increase in party politics.

Figure 6. Cumulative proportions of depoliticized and party politics, 2005, 2006, 2007 compared to 2010, 2011.

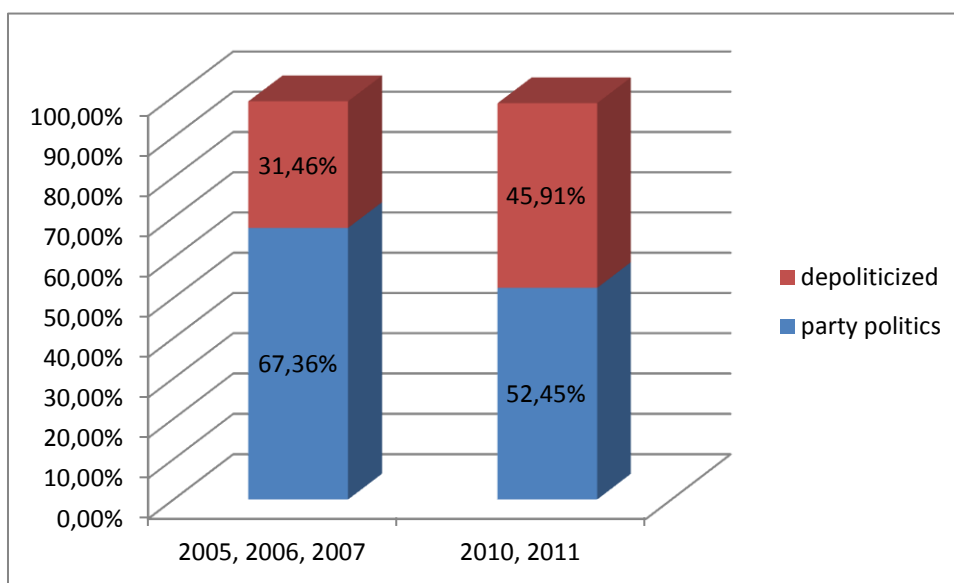


Figure 6 shows that when our findings are presented in all four countries, the group of depoliticized first contacts with politics did indeed decrease, verifying our second hypothesis for the region.

CONCLUSION

The way in which politicians grant access to their CVs publicly differs in the four Visegrad countries. However, our research was able to gather information on almost every politician in our sample.

Our results confirm the importance of political parties to MPs' political recruitment in the region. The highest proportion of MPs reporting on the beginning of their political career within political parties can be found in Hungary. We have found that there are similar trends among different recruitment channels of the four CEE countries: party founders have a similar share of the seats (5–10%). Many MPs attach importance to party membership in all the selected countries, but this has very high importance in the Czech case (45%). Hungarian MPs indicated their connection to the Communist Party with a very high proportion (25%), while it was almost insignificant in the other three countries. A relatively high proportion of young politicians start their careers in youth organizations in Hungary (14%), while these organizations have significantly less importance in the other countries of the region (2–4%). The CVs of MPs reflect little on the fact that their political career started in another political party in Slovakia and in Hungary (2–4%), while Czech and Polish MPs mention it more often (9–11%). Only a small minority of MPs start their careers outside political parties. The highest proportion can be found in Slovakia and Poland. Winning parties necessitate the recruitment of members from local politics at almost the same scale (20–28%); few famous personalities get seats as MPs in all countries (2–7%), and mentioning any activity regarding issues for ethnic minorities proved to be very low. Being an expert affiliated to a political party is an especially preferred option of Slovak politicians (28%), while it has much less importance in the other cases. The role of political movements is reflected by a relatively high proportion of MPs in Poland (10%), while other politicians from the region refer to it at a much lower proportion (1–4%).

We developed two time groups in order to investigate if we find any differences between the self-representation of the MPs in their CVs in connection with the global economic crisis. We have verified our hypothesis that the self-representation of the MPs in their CVs has changed significantly. We found that they increasingly emphasize first contact points with politics that are closer to society and farther from the sphere of politics. We have termed these first contact points *depoliticized* because they do not represent party politics. However, as discussed above, the recruitment channels are dominantly controlled by political parties; therefore, our results do not mean the actual depoliticization of the MPs of the region, only a change in the self-representation of members of parliament.

Our aim was to contribute to an already existing scientific debate from another aspect. Since these abovementioned trends stem from publicly available data and texts subject to the goals of politicians, future research can answer the question of whether the self-representation of MPs differ from other available data. The comparison of our results with data gathered directly from MPs or from different parliamentary groups can add important implications about the transparency of the political elite of the Visegrad countries: it is highly conceivable that there is an ideological difference among parties of the region regarding the roles of their members in the communist parties of the past. Future research may help us to see the matter more clearly, and therefore, this is highly recommended.

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PUBLIC MATERNALISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND HUNGARY:
WORK-FAMILY POLICIES IN TWO POST-SOCIALIST WELFARE STATES

ABSTRACT

This article compares the post-1989 development of work-family policies aimed at mothers of young children in two Visegrad countries, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The comparison draws on the conceptual framework of ‘maternalism’ and expands it by focusing on the similarities and differences between two welfare states which provide generous public support to the maternal care of young children; it also incorporates an analysis of policy and political documents. The paper argues that in the Czech Republic, public support is given exclusively to the maternal care of children under the age of three, while the Hungarian system offers basic public support to day care services as well. The discursive analysis has revealed the same pattern: Czech documents focus entirely on maternal care, though mothers are subsumed under the ‘family’, while Hungarian texts contain a wider range of discourses about childcare.

Key words

post socialism; welfare states, work-family policies, maternalism

INTRODUCTION

Starting in 1989, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe underwent fundamental political, economic and social changes, which had a particularly strong impact on women. One important outcome for women was that their labour market participation in these countries declined – in a period when, in other parts of Europe, women were becoming better integrated in the labour market. Welfare state arrangements also changed radically in these countries after the collapse of state socialist regimes – indeed, many analysts feared that this would lead to women becoming the losers of the transformations (see, for example, Einhorn, 1993; Funk and Mueller, 1993). However, the Czech Republic and Hungary maintained and even extended their state socialist family policies³ after 1989, including the system of very long, paid maternity and parental leaves, which

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³ Family policies include cash payments and tax credits to parents raising children as well as paid maternity / parental leaves designed to help parents combine paid work and caring for young children. This article refers to maternity / parental leaves and publicly supported day care for children as work-family policies, following Hobson and Fahlén, 2009 and Lewis, 2009.

promote the maternal care of young children. Thus, both countries have been characterised as ‘public maternalist’ welfare states (Glass and Fodor, 2007).

Family policies are commonly analysed in the framework of comparative welfare state research. State socialist and post-state socialist countries were first excluded from both mainstream (Esping-Andersen, 1990) and feminist welfare state typologies (Lewis, 1993; Lister, 2003; Orloff, 2009), then treated as a homogenous group (Deacon, 1992; Hantrais, 2004; Pascall and Lewis, 2004). The problem of analysing post-state socialist welfare states has been widely debated (see, for example, Saxonberg, 2000; Pascall and Lewis, 2004), and it has been acknowledged that post-state socialist policies challenge existing conceptual frameworks (Michel, 2006: 146). Over the past decade, several studies have compared the family and work-family policies of post-socialist countries, focusing on differences and similarities within this group (Fodor et al., 2002; Fodor, 2005; Saxonberg and Sirovatka, 2006; Saxonberg and Szelewa, 2007; Szelewa and Polakowski, 2008; Szelewa, 2010; Szikra, 2010; Szikra and Szelewa, 2010; Saxonberg 2014). This article aims to further our understanding of the post-state socialist work-family policy development in two countries, the Czech Republic and Hungary, which at first glance seem to have followed similar paths. Yet, as we will argue, a more detailed analysis reveals important differences, especially in the provision of publicly supported day care for children under the age of three.

The developments are analysed through the following research questions. How have work-family policies changed since 1989? In particular, how have these policies influenced mothers’ ability to maintain links with the labour market? What may explain the different trends in the two countries? Our analysis draws on the conceptual framework of ‘maternalism’ (Glass and Fodor, 2007) and expands it by focusing on two countries with public maternalist policies, and by incorporating the analysis of policy texts and political debates into the comparative framework. We argue that, while both countries can be characterized as ‘public maternalist’ welfare states, public support in the Czech Republic is restricted to the maternal care of children under the age of three. This is in contrast to the Hungarian system, which offers public support not only to maternal care but also to day care services. The discursive analysis has revealed the same pattern: Czech documents focus entirely on maternal care, though mothers are subsumed under the ‘family’; while Hungarian texts contain a wider range of discourses about childcare.

In the following section, we outline the theoretical debates related to welfare state development in post-state socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Based on this theoretical background, we then describe the structure and principles of maternity and parental leaves in the Czech Republic and Hungary after 1989, focusing on how they shape mothers’ ability to maintain links with the labour market. Then, we turn to day care services for children under the age of three, concentrating on three issues: changing policies, day care capacities and political discourses in the two countries. In the final section, we outline our arguments and their theoretical relevance in full, and recommend further research.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Most scholarship on the family policies of post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe adopted the theoretical framework of ‘familisation’ (Leitner, 2003; Hantrais, 2004; Pascall and Lewis, 2004; Saxonberg and Sirovatka, 2006, 2007; Szelewa, 2006; Szelewa and Polakowski, 2008; Szikra, 2010; Hašková and Szikra, 2012), and compared the extent to which

policies ascribe childcare responsibilities to the family or share them with public childcare institutions. Policy changes in the post-socialist Czech Republic were argued to follow the general trend of ‘re-familisation’, while those in Hungary were discussed as a slight exception to the general trends (Saxonberg and Sirovatka, 2007). Szelewa and Polakowski (2008) characterized the policy framework of caring for pre-school children between 1989 and 2004 in the Czech Republic as ‘female mobilizing’, followed by ‘explicit familialism’; and also as a succession of ‘explicit familialism’ and ‘weak comprehensive support’ in Hungary. They argued that Hungarian mothers had some freedom to choose between looking after their young children at home and using public services, though the system ultimately supports maternal care, just as the Czech policies do. While the study by Szelewa and Polakowski (2008) is so far unique in terms of their approach, the number of countries included and the time period covered, it also has certain limitations. Szikra (2010) pointed out that certain groups of Hungarian women, such as those living in rural areas and the Roma, have only a very limited choice, due to the difficulties and/or discrimination they face in securing day care for their children under the age of three. Thus, Szikra characterised the Hungarian policy regime as ‘limited optional familialism.’⁴ Second, Szelewa and Polakowski (2008) compared childcare services for children aged 3–6, which excluded an important area for comparison: public day care services for children aged 0–3.

A smaller body of research relies on the conceptual framework of ‘maternalism’ when comparing the welfare states of post-socialist countries (Glass and Fodor, 2007, 2011). The Czech Republic and Hungary are argued to have maintained a system of ‘public maternalism’ (Glass and Fodor, 2007): after the end of state socialism, both countries continued to provide state support to childbearing and childraising through cash payments and long, paid maternity and parental leaves. This is not the case with all post-socialist countries, or even with all Visegrad countries: the maternalist arm of the welfare state has been largely dismantled in Poland (Glass and Fodor, 2007). We find the conceptual framework of maternalism more suitable for our analysis than familialism, as it highlights that parental leaves are used almost exclusively by mothers in the two countries and thus, only mothers’ / women’s integration into the labour market is affected.⁵ As post-state socialist maternalism is a central concept of this article, we discuss it in some detail below, including its origins.

Haney conceptualized state-socialist maternalism as an assumption of policy makers that “women have special needs as – potential – mothers and thus have to be protected” in paid employment (2002: 104). Long, paid maternity leaves, introduced in the 1960s and 1970s, were designed to help mothers to ‘reconcile’ childcare and paid work.⁶ Although these policies seem very similar to the work-life reconciliation policies currently recommended by the European Union, there are also a number of important differences.

First, in the state-socialist context, where all able-bodied adults were legally obliged to work, the long maternity leave served the purpose of *temporarily removing* mothers from the workforce. Their jobs were guaranteed, and all women returned to full-time work after a few years of maternity leave, during which they were counted as ‘employed’ in official statistics (Fodor,

⁴ According to the ‘limited’ optional familialism argument, poor women, the majority of whom are Romani, are discriminated against in the child care system, as the system prefers mothers with good employment records.

⁵ The labour market effects of ‘familialist’ state policies are also explored by examining the labour force participation of mothers. See also Saxonberg (2013) for a critique of the theoretical framework of familialism.

⁶ Maternalist movements in Western Europe and the USA in the early 20th century (see for example Koven and Michel, 1993) aimed to secure state support only for those mothers who were not supported by their husbands, and thus had to work for pay.

2003).⁷ Second, after a period in the 1950s and early 1960s, when mothers' inclusion in the workforce was attempted through a relatively short period of maternity leave and the provision of day care for all children, long leaves were seen by state socialist policy makers as a cheaper *alternative* to public day care services for infants (Haney, 2002; Fodor, 2003; Saxonberg, 2014). Third, state socialist maternalist policies were embedded in a strong discourse about children's psychological needs and focused entirely on the mother-child unit, de-emphasising the role of fathers (Adamik, 2000; Goven, 2000; Haney, 2002; Saxonberg, 2011, 2014). Finally, the policies granted special rights to mothers and constituted them as a special group of employees: 'worker-mothers' (Einhorn, 1993; Fodor, 2003; Haney, 2002).

Against this theoretical background, this article compares the development of work-family policies in the Czech Republic and Hungary from 1989 to the present, paying special attention to the political debates related to the provision of childcare services for children under the age of three.

ANALYSIS

In this section, we compare the work-family policies in the two countries over time, focusing on maternity and parental leaves and benefits, public childcare services, and policy and political debates about childcare.

Parental leaves and benefits in the Czech Republic and Hungary 1990–2012

A relatively short and generously paid maternity leave⁸ has been the most stable element of the system in both countries. Mothers who paid mandatory social insurance contributions (those who were employed) before childbirth have been eligible for this leave in both countries throughout the time period.⁹ Maternity leave can be followed by extended leaves, which have changed several times in both countries since 1989; however, their most important features have remained constant: the leaves are very long in international comparison, and the benefits are too low to maintain an independent household. Although these leaves became available to fathers in both countries in the 1980s / early 1990s, very few fathers make use of them, thus, these parental leaves effectively function as extended maternity leaves, and are regarded as such by policy makers and the general public. Let us briefly compare the changes, focusing on how parental leaves affected mothers' inclusion in the labour market.

First, under state socialism, not all mothers, only those with previous employment history, were eligible for maternity and parental leaves, in other words, the paid leaves were insurance-based. In practice, this distinction was not particularly important, as almost all able-bodied women were employed before 1989. In the early 1990s, when the level of employment declined in both countries, the leaves became available to all mothers, some of whom did not hold a paid job before childbirth. Second, after 1989, mothers in both countries were encouraged to stay outside the workforce for even longer periods than

⁷ In contrast, in non-state socialist countries at the time, women tended to leave the labour market after having children, and returned to work, typically part time, when their children were in school. The long, paid parental leave, introduced in Sweden around the same time as in state-socialist countries (Lewis and Aström, 1992) was designed to encourage mothers to return to work earlier, and thus to keep them *integrated* in the labour market.

⁸ It is sometimes referred to as a 'birthing' leave. The maternity pay replaces about 70% of the mother's former wages / salary.

⁹ In the Czech Republic, women on birthing leave are classified as employed.

before. In the Czech Republic, the period when a mother was eligible for parental benefits¹⁰ was first extended to three, then to four years for all mothers, regardless of the number of children. In Hungary, a new type of paid leave was introduced for mothers with three or more children, which allowed them to stay out of the labour market until the 8th birthday of the youngest child. Thus, we argue that after 1989, parental leaves, policies which support the maternal care of young children in the home, became more extensive, and somewhat disconnected from the labour market in both countries. These changes were designed and implemented to fulfil economic and political goals: to reduce the labour supply of women and thus, the level of female unemployment (Gábos, 2000; Gyarmati, 2010; Hašková et al., 2009; Višek, 2006; Potůček, 1999). Figure 1 summarises and compares maternalist welfare policies in the two countries, as they were at the end of 2013, at the time of writing this article.

Figure 1: Maternity and parental leaves and benefits in the Czech Republic and Hungary

	Czech Republic	Hungary
Insurance-based schemes		
Maternity leave and pay	28 weeks, 70% of previous earnings, up to a ceiling	24 weeks, 70% of previous earnings, no ceiling
Fathers eligible?	Yes, from the seventh week after childbirth.	No
Is paid work allowed?	No	No
Parental leave and benefit	Leave: until the child's third birthday, job guarantee. Benefit: fixed overall amount in monthly payments until the child's 2 nd or 3 rd birthday; at a max. of 70% of previous monthly earnings, with a ceiling.	Until the child's 2 nd birthday. 70% of previous earnings, with a ceiling.
Is paid work allowed?	Yes, without restrictions	No
Fathers eligible?	Yes	Yes
Universal schemes		
Parental leave and benefit	Leave: until the child's 3 rd birthday, job guarantee. Benefit: fixed overall amount in monthly payments until the child's 4 th birthday; higher in the first 9 months.	Until the child's 3 rd birthday, job guarantee. Flat rate (same as minimum old age pension).
Does being on parental leave count towards pension?	Yes, 100% up to four years per child.	Yes, 100% up to three years per child.
Is paid work allowed?	Yes, without restrictions.	Yes, part time, after the child reaches the age of 1 year, max. 30 hours a week.
Fathers eligible?	Yes	Yes
Special parental leave and benefit for large families	No	Yes, for families with at least 3 children under 18. The same as the flat rate parental benefit between the 3 rd and 8 th birthday of the youngest

¹⁰ The Czech system is special in the sense that parental leave and the parental pay are somewhat independent of each other.

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Sources: ČZZS, 2014; MOLSA, 2014a, b; Országos Egészségbiztosítási Pénztár, 2013

Another aspect of the growing distance between the parental leave system and the labour market is that although women's jobs remained protected by law during parental leave, women after 1989 found it increasingly difficult to return to the workforce when the leave ended. Many women had no jobs to return to, because companies disappeared or were completely reorganised while mothers were on leave (Frey, 2002), while others became the victims of employer discrimination (see, for example: Glass and Fodor, 2011; Hašková et al., 2009). Mothers, and to some extent, all women of reproductive age were seen as 'unreliable' employees, already under state socialism, because they could take long periods of leave. However, before 1989, all mothers were given a job when their leave ended, whereas in the newly emerged capitalist economies, employers were under pressure to keep labour costs low and had much more freedom in selecting their workers than before. In the Czech Republic, the issue became even more complicated when eligibility for the parental benefit was extended to four years, but the job guarantee for mothers on leave, included in the Labour Code, was not extended. In other words, Czech mothers who did not return to work after the child's third birthday lost their right to return to their former employer (Hašková et al., 2009).¹¹ Although both countries have anti-discrimination laws in place, their implementation and utilization lags behind, exacerbating employment discrimination.

Although long parental leaves were maintained and further extended in both countries, mothers were not treated as a homogeneous group after 1989: different 'maternal tracks' were created, based on mothers' employment status before childbirth. These tracks did not emerge at the same time in the two countries: in Hungary, a shorter, better paid maternal leave, aimed at higher-earning women was created already in 1985 (Gábos, 2000; Gyarmati, 2010; Haney, 2002). This leave remained insurance-based and better paid throughout the time period examined here.¹² In the Czech Republic, such 'elite' tracks were only established in 2008 and reinforced in 2012. Currently, two insurance-based (a two- and a three-year leave period) and a universal track (a four-year leave period) are available; the overall amount of the benefit is fixed, and the longer the leave, the lower the monthly payment is. Maternal tracks maintain and even increase the differences between the employment chances of different groups of mothers: those who were in an insecure labour market position, or outside the labour market before childbirth are only eligible for the universal benefits, which are lower paid and longer. In other words, these women are strongly encouraged to leave the labour force for up to three (in Hungary) or four years (in the Czech Republic), and such long breaks further reduce their chances of employment (Fodor et al., 2002; Fodor, 2005; Hašková et al., 2009; Szikra, 2010).

Paid work during the extended parental leave in the Czech Republic was strongly discouraged after 1989: mothers receiving parental benefit were allowed only a limited income from work (Hašková, et al., 2009). In Hungary, mothers on the universal parental leave¹³ were allowed to work part-time after the child's first birthday already in the 1980s (Gyarmati, 2010), but this option was not actively promoted by the government. In 2004, at the time of joining the EU, limits on combining paid work and parental leave were completely lifted in the Czech Republic; while in Hungary different rules were applied to different types of parental leave and the regulations shifted with changing governments. Mothers on the insurance-based parental leave

¹¹ This regulation remained in place even after the last reform in 2012.

¹² With the exception of the time period between 1996 and 2000, when this leave was abolished (Gábos, 2000; Gyarmati, 2010).

¹³ From January 2014, mothers on the insurance-based leave can also work for pay – it is another example of convergence between parental leave policies in the two countries.

were still not allowed to work for pay, but those on the universal leave were given this option, and between 2006 and 2010, under a socialist-led government, it was possible to work full time after the child's first birthday and receive the parental benefit. After 2010, under a right-wing government, the rules became stricter again (Gyarmati, 2010; Országos Egészségbiztosítási Pénztár, 2013). Whether mothers could take advantage of the changes and engage in paid work depended very much on the availability of day care for children, which leads us to the next section of the analysis.

To sum up, we have found that after 1989, parental leaves in the Czech Republic and in Hungary did not change radically; rather, existing state socialist policies remained in effect and became accessible to all women, and longer, though in Hungary only for those with three or more children. In the newly competitive labour markets, many mothers, especially those with limited labour market experience, found it much more difficult to return to paid work after the parental leave than under state socialism, even though the rules became more accommodating to mothers wanting to combine paid work and parental leave after 2004. At a more theoretical level, we argue, following Glass and Fodor (2007), that state socialist maternalist policies, providing public support to the maternal care of children in the home remained in effect in both countries after 1989. As for the more subtle characteristics of the two public maternalist welfare states, the Hungarian system was already differentiating between mothers in 1989 and continued to do so in the post-socialist era, on the basis of mothers' labour market position and the number of children. In the Czech system, differences in maternal policies were abolished after 1989 and the state continued to treat all mothers equally until 2008, when this egalitarian approach changed radically, and maternal tracks were created, making the two national systems very similar again.¹⁴

So far, we compared the development of maternalist policies which encourage women's temporary withdrawal from the workforce after childbirth. The other important element of work-family policies is public day care for young children, which offers an alternative to maternal care at home. Without affordable childcare services, mothers' ability to combine paid work and childcare remains limited, regardless of how flexible and generous parental leave policies may be. The provision of public day care for children under the age of three is the area where the Visegrad countries stand out among EU member states (Plantega and Remery, 2009), and where the Czech and Hungarian policies have developed in different ways.

Day care services for pre-school children

Public day care for pre-school children in post-socialist countries traditionally comprises day nurseries, designed for children under the age of three, and kindergartens, which provide care to those aged from three to six (or the compulsory school age). Kindergartens are widely accepted in both countries with about 90% of children in the age group enrolled (Saxonberg, 2014). Under state socialism, nurseries were not uncommon in the two countries, however, the proportion of children enrolled never exceeded 20% of those under three in the Czech Republic, and 15% in Hungary. After 1989, the responsibility of maintaining nurseries was devolved to the newly established local authorities and central government funding was withdrawn in both countries. Nurseries were claimed to be a 'communist invention', while maternal care was hailed as the only healthy way to raise children by conservative politicians in both countries (Gyarmati, 2010; Saxonberg et al., 2012; Kuchařová, 2009).

¹⁴Haney (2003) made a similar argument, however, her analysis focused only on a short period in the 1990s.

Figure 2: Day care services for children under the age of three in the Czech Republic and Hungary (2011)

Childcare services		
Coverage	0.5 % of children aged under 3	13% of children aged under 3
Financing	Local authorities and fees, no central funding.	Local authorities, central funding, fees paid by parents.
Cost for parents	Fees are determined by the local authority, no ceiling.	Until 2012 fees covered only meals. Since 2012 optional fees, ceiling determined by national law.
Limits in access	If a parent receives parental pay, a maximum of 46 hours a month until the child reaches the age of two.	Parents on insurance-based leave cannot use public childcare.

Source: ÚZIS, 2011; MOLSA, 2014; Svobodová, 2007; HCSO, 2012

As nurseries are very expensive to maintain, local authorities began to reduce the number of available places: 90% of nurseries in the Czech Republic, and 50% in Hungary were closed between 1990 and 1997 (Saxonberg et al., 2012; Kuchařová, Svobodová, 2006; ÚZIS, 2011; HCSO, 2012).¹⁵ The demand for nursery places also declined, as many women lost their jobs, birth rates dropped, and parental leave was extended, as described above. In the Czech Republic, the reduction in the number of nurseries continued until 2006, with the numbers having stagnated since: in 2011 only 0.5% of children under the age of 3 were enrolled in day nurseries (ÚZIS, 2011). The reduction in the number of nursery places was exacerbated by declining birth rates and parental leave regulations: parents receiving parental benefits were not allowed to take their children to public nurseries for more than five days a month.¹⁶ Finally, as public nurseries are funded exclusively by local authorities, the fees are also established locally, and although fees vary, they are unaffordable to many parents (Saxonberg, 2014; Štěpánková and Jaklová, 2006; Svobodová, 2007; Hašková, 2010).

The story of Hungarian day nurseries took a different turn after 1997, when, under a socialist-led government, nurseries became classified as a form of basic child-welfare service.¹⁷ In the same year, a central government subsidy, based on the number of children attending the nursery was introduced. The subsidy, which covers 40–70% of the running costs (Blaskó and Gábos, 2012; Reszkető and Scharle, 2010), reduced the financial burden on local authorities, but local authorities still had to spend large amounts of money on their nurseries. The number of nursery places continued to decline until 2005, when only 47% of those available in 1990 existed. In 2005, a new regulation obliged local authorities of cities with a population of at least 10,000 to provide nurseries (HCSO, 2012), and slowly, new nurseries started to open, but the number of places in 2012 represented only 60% of that in 1990.¹⁸ The proportion of children under three attending nurseries reached the lowest level (9% in 1992), then started to grow again: in 2012, 13.5% were enrolled (HCSO, 2012). Parents were traditionally charged only for the meals provided, but a new rule, introduced in 2012, allows local authorities to charge higher fees: up to 25% of the net family income per person (HCSO, 2013). While it is too early to tell, low-earning parents may find the new fees unaffordable.¹⁹

¹⁵ The less dramatic decline in Hungary was probably due to the fact that the number of available places had already been gradually reduced in the 1980s (HCSO, 2012).

¹⁶ The parental leave reform in 2012 loosened these restrictions to 46 hours a month until the child's second birthday.

¹⁷ 1997. évi XXXI. Törvény a gyermekek védelméről és a gyámügyi igazgatásáról [Law XXXI of 1997 on Child protection and related legal proceedings].

¹⁸ There was a sudden increase in the number of places from 2009 to 2010, due to a new rule, which allowed nurseries increase group sizes in nurseries by 20%. This increase is deducted from the numbers presented here.

¹⁹ Not all nurseries introduced higher fees (HCSO, 2012).

In summary, while nurseries in the Czech Republic became irrelevant, in Hungary, a basic coverage remained, and the enrolment rate among children under three is only slightly below that under state socialism. Though the coverage is far below the Barcelona targets of the European Union (33% of children under three), a basic level of support is provided to women who want to return to work. At a more theoretical level, we argue that work-family policies which allow mothers of children under the age of three to 'reconcile' paid work and childcare, have developed in rather different ways in the two countries: state support was completely withdrawn from this area in the Czech Republic, but maintained in Hungary.

Policy debates about nurseries

To contextualize the developments of day care policies, we now turn to the analysis of relevant policy and political debates in the two countries. In the 1990s, the dominant public discourse in the Czech Republic remained focused on nurseries as a "communist invention," which had to be dismantled. Family care, especially maternal care was perceived as the only "natural" and "healthy" form of care for children under three (Saxonberg et al., 2012; Kuchařová, 2009). This discussion was dominated by the arguments of conservative, Catholic psychologists, who had good access to the media (Saxonberg et al., 2012). The arguments focused on the alleged negative effects of nurseries on children's cognitive and emotional development, shaping the opinion of policy makers and the general public (Saxonberg et al., 2012).

These arguments continued to influence Czech policy makers in the 1990s (Saxonberg et al., 2012; Saxonberg, 2014), and in the present, as reflected in the "National Conception for the Support of Families with Children", which outlines the family policy strategy of the Czech government (MOLSA, 2009). The document states that the provision of public childcare services for children under three is not a priority, and referring to paediatricians and child psychologists, claims that parental care is the best option for children in this age group. Yet, the document promises to remove barriers from the development of privately run, profit-oriented childcare services for children under three, and the organization of these services is presented as a matter of supply and demand.

These opinions were also defended at European-level debates. After the Czech Republic was criticised by the European Commission because of the lack of public childcare (Plantenga and Remery, 2009), a meeting of European ministers was called during the Czech Presidency of the European Union in 2009 to start a debate about the EU targets regarding public day care services (Vláda České Republiky, 2009). At the meeting, the Czech representative explicitly argued against day care, referring to the country's negative experiences.

I'm skeptical about some trends in Western European countries, which, unlike us, have no experience with [...] the negative effects of an attempt by the state to take over the natural functions of the family. The new member countries can contribute their own specific historical experiences and findings on childcare (quoted in Szikra and Hašková, 2012).

Childcare is presented here as a 'natural function of the family', which has to be defended from the encroaching state. Czech representatives at the meeting also claimed that the targets would not have been adopted in the first place had the CEE countries been EU members when the Barcelona targets were formulated.

Hungarian policy makers had a less straightforward approach to nurseries. Although the official anti-nursery discourse disappeared after 1994, when the first, conservative post-socialist government left office, nurseries were not actively promoted, and debates about family policies depicted women as mothers only (Goven, 2000). The 1997 Law on Child Protection, which raised the status of nurseries, was influenced by child-protection experts, and referred to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, when it classified day care services (nurseries, and other forms of day care for children under three, but not kindergartens) as belonging to “basic child-protection services”, and obliged all local authorities to provide such day care for children whose parents cannot look after them because they work or study.

The first policy document which endorsed day care for young children was *The Principles of the Governmental Programme on Demographic Policies* (2003). The text challenged the opinion, widely held by Hungarian demographers and policy makers, that birth rates can be boosted by long parental leaves, and argued that state policies cannot affect demographic processes directly. Instead, it proposed to improve birth rates by creating better conditions for childbearing, including the elimination of discrimination against women in employment and redesigning family policies to better fit the changing patterns of childbearing. The text referred to several EU documents on best practices in providing day care to young children (Kispéter, 2009).

The *National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2004–06*, published in 2004, explicitly stated the government’s aim to increase the number of nursery and kindergarten places (2004). Nurseries entered centre stage in family policy debates in 2009, when the socialist-led government proposed to cut parental leaves. Government representatives referred to the Lisbon and Barcelona targets and used the examples of Scandinavian child welfare and gender equality to justify the proposal to shorten the universal parental leave. Professional care was argued to contribute to children’s healthy development, at the same time that the Czech government declared the opposite, and the ‘Day of Nurseries’ was established in 2009 (SZMM, 2010). Right-wing women’s groups opposed the cuts, arguing that “families, women and children” all benefit from the maternal care of young children and this is also the best way to boost birth rates. They also referred to nurseries, but instead of pointing out their negative impact on children, they argued that it would be a mistake to cut the three-year parental leave without having enough day care places (Kispéter, 2009).

The following right-wing government, which came into office in 2010, demonstrated its opposition to the Barcelona targets by organising the ‘Week of the Family’ during the Hungarian Presidency of the European Union in 2011. The Hungarian Prime Minister defended parents’ right to choose the best care for their children, and called on the governments of member states to provide financial support to families who want to care for their children at home, rather than forcing all families to follow the same lifestyle.²⁰ This argument is close to the official Czech opinion in rejecting the EU targets, which ‘force’ families to use day care. However, the psychological discourse which dominates Czech policy texts was not invoked and the decision of the family in *choosing* day care options is highlighted, rather than openly prioritizing maternal care.

In the final turn of the story of Hungarian nurseries so far, at the time of writing this article, the same conservative Hungarian government which criticised the Barcelona targets, is proudly presenting the increasing number of nurseries in

²⁰ Report on the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for demography and family policy issues, held in Gödöllő, April 1, 2011. <http://www.eu2011.hu/news/orban-eu-should-not-build-its-future-immigration>

Hungary, and higher nursery subsidies to local authorities were being introduced in the run-up to the 2014 general and local elections.

Policy debates about nurseries discussed above show important differences between Hungary and the Czech Republic. The rejection of nurseries as a communist invention, and psychological arguments about children's needs remained central in Czech political debates, and became a key element of justifying and making sense of the vanishing nurseries and the extension of parental leave. Thus, in the Czech Republic, maternalism has strengthened after 1989 not only in terms of policies, but also in the way policy discourses construct the ideal of childcare. In Hungary, the range of political discourses on early childcare has broadened, and alternative arguments, including those of children's rights, social inclusion and maternal employment have appeared.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we analysed the maternalist welfare states of Hungary and the Czech Republic, by focusing on work-family policies aimed at mothers of young children, to explore how the post-state socialist transformations have affected women's position at the intersection of paid work and the family. One group of these policies, the system of extended parental leaves, is maternalist in nature: both states provide financial support to maternal childcare in the home, which is why they can be characterised as 'public maternalist' welfare states (Glass and Fodor, 2007). Comparing the development of parental leave policies, we have found fundamental similarities: parental leaves in both countries have become more disconnected from the labour market and come to reinforce existing labour market inequalities between different groups of mothers. Comparing the development of public day care services for children under three, we have found a major difference: in the early 1990s, state funding was withdrawn from day nurseries in both countries, but then national policies developed in different directions. In the Czech Republic, day care for children under three is still not supported by the state, while Hungarian policy makers have reinstated some state funding to nurseries.

To explore the reasons behind these different trends, we turned to national policy documents and political debates, and found that the psychological arguments of children's needs for maternal care is dominant in Czech policy texts, while recent Hungarian policy texts do not refer to child psychology. Rather, they have become more open to discourses of child poverty, social inclusion and maternal employment.

Based on these findings, we argued that although work-family policies have kept their 'public maternalist' character in both countries after 1989, Hungarian policies have remained closer to their state socialist origins and provide basic state support for day care for children under the age of three, as well as for maternal care. In contrast, Czech state policies have become more maternalist, and currently give exclusive support to the maternal care of young children; parents who want to use formal childcare have to purchase it on the market. Finally, our analysis has revealed that Czech work-family policies and political discourses consistently construct maternal care as the ideal form of childcare, while Hungarian policies and public discourses are in constant flux, and lack overall consistency.

The analysis in this paper does not allow us to identify the exact reasons behind Czech policy makers' strong opposition to day care services throughout the time period examined in this article. However, the texts analysed above and existing research (Kuchařová, 2009; Saxonberg et al., 2012) suggest that the need to create a distance from the state socialist past (represented by nurseries) is a likely motivation. This need seems to have been less strong among Hungarian policy makers, who, shifting away from maternalism, reinstated state support to nurseries as early as in 1997. It is important to highlight that this move was justified by the best interests of children, referring to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, while Czech policy makers explained the rejection of day care by referring to research on children's cognitive and emotional development (Saxonberg et al., 2012). Accession to the European Union in 2004 also had different consequences on work-family policies in the two countries: while Hungarian policy documents increasingly linked gender equality and women's employment to the provision of public day care services, and nurseries were endorsed by policy makers, such developments did not begin in the Czech Republic. On the contrary, Czech political leaders openly defy the European Union's childcare policies, claiming that their aim is to protect the 'family' from the 'state'.

This article has expanded the conceptual framework of maternalism by highlighting variation within public maternalist policies, and thus, contributed to theoretical debates about post-state socialist welfare state development. We suggest further research to explore how different welfare state policies shape maternal and female employment and gender inequality in the labour markets of the Czech Republic and Hungary. Finally, we believe that comparative research on post-socialist childcare policies and welfare states in general would benefit from adopting the conceptual framework of maternalism, so that we, social scientists, no longer hide mothers behind the 'family'.

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INTEGRATION VS MARGINALIZATION: SHAPING THE PATTERNS OF CIRCULAR MIGRATION

ABSTRACT

In recent times, the win-win outcomes of circular migration for all the involved stakeholders have come under a thorough academic focus and have increased in social-political importance for both the host and home countries, not to mention the migrants themselves. Given the inherent importance of the issue for countries' public policies, it comes as no surprise that attention is often paid to the intrinsic pros and cons for both host and home societies. What might ponder, however, is the fact that the main actors of this process, the circular migrants, gain rather limited attention or scrutiny. The main aim of this article is therefore to unveil what actually happens with circular immigrants in the host countries, and which pattern – integration or marginalization – shapes their destiny in the host society. This question will be investigated through a case study of Ukrainian immigrants in Spain. The outcomes of this applied research into the sociology of the circular migration demonstrate that both concepts are not mutually exclusive, and do not fundamentally preclude integration.

Key words

circular migration, integration, marginalization

The topic of the integration of immigrants into the host society is not new in the history of mankind. The old proverb “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” only confirms it. However, in recent times, the countries of the European Union (EU) have paid much attention to the problem of the co-existence of native people with immigrants. For instance, German Chancellor Angela Merkel called this problem the “vital task for the future”. In September 2010, she stressed that it was an illusion to think that Germans and foreign workers could live happily side by side (Smee 2010). Merkel insisted on the importance of German language fluency, respect for the cultural norms of German society and following the German lifestyle as all being necessary conditions for a normal life for immigrants in Germany. The second (here, exemplary) politician to talk about the dysfunctional concept of multiculturalism was the UK Prime Minister David Cameron, who also made a very strong declaration about the failure of multiculturalism as a mode of integration in Great Britain (Porter 2011). But in comparison to Merkel, Cameron put the emphasis on another issue that was connected with the functioning of the welfare state, and the burden that immigrants meant for public funds and public services, and, of course, the influence of immigrants on the employment/unemployment level in Britain (Porter 2011). At the same time, these political leaders recognize that the economic development of their countries really depends on immigrants. Moreover, the demographic situation also puts pressure on the welfare system distribution in EU countries, which then motivates governments to think thoroughly about decision-making and the policy concerning the lives of immigrants in their countries.

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In reality, immigrants bring with themselves not only the ability to do work, but also customs, traditions, religion and lifestyles that, sometimes, did not correspond to the norms of the host society. Another issue pertaining to the life of immigrants in a host society is the demand for recognition of one's own culture and traditions, respect for one's identity and lifestyle. In contemporary nation states, native populations are concerned with the dilemma of "national purity", and this is not only the problem of those who believe that immigrants, with their traditions, make the host nation weaker and lead to the "erosion" of nation. Lack of cohesion is likely to generate "us" and "them" groups, and in this way divides society. What is more, it wields influence not only on the social, but also on the political life of the host country (Zanfrini 2007). This process is often instrumentalised by some political forces that attempt to get some additional support while highlighting the problem of societal cohesion and division. Furthermore, we frequently hear from native-born people that immigrants take their jobs, although this very often does not correspond to reality as, due to the segmentation of the labour market, the majority of immigrants work in occupations that the natives would never undertake (Angulo Bárcena 2006). At the same time, a lot of immigrants try to use all benefits that the host society provides to them, such as public services or medical assistance; in this sense, immigrants could be considered an "additional burden" to the public budget. All these dilemmas illustrate the crisis of relations being experienced between the host society and the immigrants.

The roots of the current problems touching the life of immigrants in the host societies should be examined through a historical perspective. The reconstruction of post-war Europe prompted developed Western countries such as the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium and Germany to invite guest workers in order to fill their labour shortage. Recruitment of guest workers was built on the principles of temporary immigration for a limited period, with restricted rights, and minimal family reunification opportunities for immigrants. As Castles emphasizes, in this way Western European countries were trying to "import labour, but not people" (Castles 2006: 742). However, the oil crisis and economic stagnation made these countries stop inviting guest workers. Moreover, it was expected that guest workers would return to their home countries, but it rarely happened. If guest workers from EC countries (such as Spain, Italy, Greece) started their "return projects" for coming back home, those migrants that originated from non-EC (i.e. third) countries, such as Turkey and ex-Yugoslavia, failed to launch their "return projects". The decision was evidently made because of the great uncertainty that migrants would have been faced with, had they returned home. As a result, surviving this oil crisis in the host country has been both an optimal and thus widely used option. In the wake of implementing such a decision, a lot of migrants began undertaking both legal and illegal processes of family reunification, and thus settled with their families in the host countries. So, these temporary migrant workers turned into permanent immigrants (Castles 2006).

According to Castles (2006), since the guest-worker system was based on the principles of the inferiority and separation of the foreigners, immigrants tended not to be treated as equals to the native people. They were seen as disadvantaged and racially discriminated minorities in the host society. As a result, immigrants showed the tendency to settle separately from the host people, in specific neighbourhoods with inferior infrastructure and housing. Therefore, it became possible to observe an increase and development of different ethnic, cultural and religious organizations. In this way, the policy of guest workers led to the social division of European societies. Moreover, Castles considers Europeans to be conscious of the processes that touch ethnic minorities, such as social exclusion, high unemployment and segmentation of the labour market, and also residential segregation. This state of affairs has persuaded Europeans to reject and avoid guest-worker programs or temporary migration schemes, due to its unpredictable social consequences (Castles 2006:743–744).

CIRCULAR MIGRATION AS A NEW MODEL OF MIGRATION?

Nevertheless, nowadays, it is possible to observe discussion in both the political and academic fields concerning the circular migration pattern that actually reminds us very much of the temporary working programs. Besides circular migration, this type of mobility can be also seen as repeat, shuttling, rotating, multiple, cyclical, oscillating, and incomplete migration (Wallace–Stola 2001). Repeat migration is not a new form of mobility; this topic was at the centre of research discussions starting from the 1960s. As a rule, it touched some African, Asian and Pacific societies where rural workers were gravitating to the urban areas, mines, etc. in the search of a means of subsistence (Bedford, 2009: 6). And nowadays, it is possible to observe this type of mobility in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Constant, Nottmeyer, and Zimmermann (2012: 6) consider that circular migration in this region has been generated by the EU enlargement that opened new borders not only for goods, but also for the free movement of people and labour forces. While Bedford (2009: 8) stresses that opportunities caused by enlargement have not motivated an extensive replacement of the population, but circular migration has been “extended, modified, amplified and, in large measure, accommodated”.

Although there are a lot of definitions of this type of mobility, among the earliest is definition made by Zelinsky (1971: 226); according to him, circulation comprises “a great variety of movements, usually short-term, repetitive or cyclic in nature, but all having in common the lack of any declared intention of a permanent or long-lasting change in residence”. And recent definitions, as a rule, put an emphasis on the labour content of this type of mobility, for example, Constant, Nottmeyer and Zimmermann (2012: 4) describe repeat migration as “systematic and regular movement of migrants between their homelands and foreign countries typically seeking work”. Among the main peculiarities of this kind of migration is the dependence of migrants on a social network that consists of family members, friends or private intermediaries who already have this experience and can assist in the establishment in a new country. The engagement of migrants in various facets of life in both host and home societies has shaped a new mode of living that quite often can be found in the literature under ‘transnationalism’ or ‘transnational migration’. The first definition of this concept derives from the work of Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, who define it as “the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We can term these processes ‘transnationalism’ to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders (Basch et al. 1994: 7).

It must be stressed that a circular migration pattern is a form of mobility that involves not only seasonal or non-seasonal workers, but also professionals in different fields, transnational entrepreneurs, and others. However, the most important thing here is to differentiate spontaneous or unregulated circulation from managed (that is, regulated) circulation programs (Wickramasekara 2011). In turn, Skeldon (2012) emphasized that political effort to convert circular mobility into circular migration programs will transform repeat labour mobility into temporary migration programs that were used by some European countries in the post-war period. The same opinion can be found also in Castles (2006), who pointed out that circular migration programs would lead to the resurrection of the guest-worker temporary programs.

As guest-worker programs have already been given a lot of attention in academic and political circles, special attention should be paid to the unregulated forms of circular migration, as they are not regulated by states and have gained a little official awareness due to its establishment by unofficial migrants' networks. In addition, nowadays, the interest in this kind of mobility is caused by the discussion on win-win outcomes for all participants of this labour migration pattern: for instance, the host country gets workers and avoids integration costs; the home country receives remittances, lower levels of unemployment and a transfer of best economic or social practices from developed countries, while migrants by themselves have to be satisfied of accumulated financial means, temporal occupation and circular presence in their families life (Agunias–Newland 2007). However, this opinion is not supported by everybody. Wickramasekara (2011), for instance, demonstrates that there are a lot of weak points for every participant of the migration process. This is because temporary migrants, usually, join the secondary sectors of the host country labour market; they suffer from discrimination and exploitation, xenophobic attitudes, deskilling, and marginalization that is the result of a lack of employment protection and also a lack of integration opportunities. Furthermore, repeat migrants very often do not complete all rules connected with the legalization of their employment in the host country, as their employers try to avoid additional costs, and this situation puts migrants in a more precarious situation in the host country (Kaczmarczyk 2002: 35; Calavita 1998).

Therefore, for Kaczmarczyk (2002: 32–33) circular migrants have almost no possibility to absorb and transfer the best social and economic practices of developed countries. And declarations that temporary migrants become actors of change look very illusive. Firstly, one of the pieces of evidence of this is an intention of migrants to forget about their experience abroad. Returning to the home country is treated as a return to normality (Kaczmarczyk 2002). Secondly, Wickramasekara (2011) considers that very often, skills that were acquired abroad may not be relevant for the home country labour market conditions, for instance, migrants with technical or expert backgrounds can be found in situations where their skills and knowledge cannot be used appropriately because of an inappropriate infrastructure and institutional framework in the country of origin. However, Constant, Nottmeyer, and Zimmermann (2012: 10) suppose that repeat migrants are willing to accept low-skilled and low-paid jobs in the host country, as this occupation is believed to be temporary, and it is expected to be remunerated better than their occupation in the home country. So, in this way, migrants can achieve their goal: accumulating a larger amount of savings in a short time.

As has been mentioned before, the earliest research on circular migration stressed that circulation is a form of mobility that does not aim to change permanent residence or settlement – in other words, the movements of circular migration start and end in the same society and have a repetitive or cyclic character (Zelinsky 1971; Chapman–Mansell Prothero 1983–1984; Skeldon 2010). Home is the key to understanding the circular migration phenomenon: it is the place that is left, but it is also the place where one is expected to return (Kaczmarczyk 2002: 9). One of the features that distinguish temporary or circular migration is also a possibility of immigrants to participate in the productive and demographic activities of their families and society. Therefore, the territory division of different family and economical responsibilities and activities is so important for migrants (Chapman & Mansell Prothero 1983–1984: 598; Kaczmarczyk 2002: 9). At the same time, Bedford (2009: 7) considers circular mobility to be a system that lasts because the destination place becomes the socio-spatial extensions of the home. Therefore, origin and destination places are not separate entities, but are “nodes in evolving and ever-changing clusters of places that have relevance for human livelihoods.” Vertovec (2009: 88), for instance, supposes that in this context the country of origin serves as the source of identity, while the country of residence becomes the source of rights.

Some researchers believe that circulation is not an occasional event resulting from temporary imbalances in labour markets and a favourable relation between wages and prices, but it may be sustainable model of behaviour that, actually, is rooted in many cultures and societies (Chapman–Mansell Prothero 1983–1984). On the one hand, circular migration is motivated by migrants' desire to save their "status quo" that means a certain lifestyle in their home country (Constant Nottmeyer–Zimmermann 2012: 13). On the other hand, circulation is a way to poverty reduction (Skeldon 2010). With the example of the Poles in Germany, Kaczmarczyk (2002) shows that circular mobility is rather a part of the life strategy and a permanent component of economic activity. In spite of their years spent in Germany, temporary Polish workers strongly believe that their future and the future of their children lies in Poland. This situation makes them live on the cusp of both countries, and it also becomes one more feature of the temporary migrant (Kaczmarczyk 2002: 40).

At the same time, this life on the border of the home and host societies prevents repeat migrants from the problems connected with settling in the new country. Being oriented towards the home country, repeat migrants do not need to solve the difficult and painful dilemmas of adaptation to the host society and their assimilation or integration in it. Additionally, among the positive aspects of the temporary mobility is the ability to save and maintain an original identity, while also participating in the host society. However, Kaczmarczyk (2002) considers that in this case, it would be very constructive to use the concept of "marginal man" developed by Park (1928). This concept is applied to a person of many cultures who does not, however, participate fully in any of them and cannot find his/her proper place. Being under the influence of a dynamic and changing contemporaneity, migrants are in "danger of losing their identity" and, as a result, are face the threat of marginalization. Moreover, attention should be paid to the fact that immigrants' long-term significant earnings are accompanied by persistent marginalization. Being ripped out of their native society, they have the possibility to belong to different cultures, albeit without the possibility of identification with any of them. Often, this process finishes with the rejection of both cultures (Park, 1928).

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The main aim of this article is to study what actually happens with circular immigrants in the host countries: integration or marginalization becomes the destiny for circular migrants in the host society. This study is based on empirical data taken from my PhD thesis, *Integration of Ukrainian Immigrants into the Spanish Society: A Case Study of the Basque Country* (Gorodetska 2012). As Ukrainians in Spain are representatives of unmanaged/spontaneous circular migration, it was decided to choose qualitative methods of research in order to unveil all peculiarities of this type of mobility. Empirical material has been gathered through the conducting of in-depth interviews with Ukrainian immigrants in the Basque Provinces, as this is one of the best ways to build open conversation with migrants. Using the "snowball or chain sampling" principle, respondents were sought out in places where they congregate, such as "Russian shops" (selling items from countries of the former Soviet Union), the Ukrainian church, or sites where clusters of migrants meet to dispatch parcels to Ukraine. For the in-depth interviews with respondents, a questionnaire on the basis of the Heckmann integration model has been developed (cf. the Interview Questionnaire in Appendix 1). The field work of the research was conducted during the period of June 16–September 22, 2010. Research material includes 41 in-depth interviews with Ukrainian immigrants of active working age: 20–64 years old. As the migration of Ukrainians in Spain is slightly feminized, it has been decided to save the same gender share in the research: 54% (22 respondents) of women to 46% (19 respondents) of men.

As there is no widely consensual or standard definition of circular migration, it makes it difficult to define its patterns in temporal terms (i.e. via the length of stay in the destination country). Nevertheless, Wickramasekara (2011: 10) draws on the typology developed by Pastore (2008) as one of the more promising attempts to classify mobility types through the length of stay in the receiving country.

Table 1: Length of stay and type of mobility

Length of stay	Type of mobility
Under three months	Short-term mobility
Under 6–9 months	Seasonal migration (circular migration)
Under five years	Temporary migration (circular migration)
Over five years	Long-term migration

Source: Pastore, 2008

Hence, for Pastore (2008), circular migration can cover a period up to five years. Yet, this time is necessary for receiving the status of long-term resident in some EU countries. This model will be applied thus for the case study of Ukrainians in the Basque Country, and the frequency of trips of research participants to their home country will serve as an indicator of mobility type. According to the research results, it is thus possible to distinguish between four groups of respondents that demonstrate similar patterns of mobility. The first group consists of those interviewees who still have not visited their home country; however, they demonstrate a strong commitment to do so. As a rule, this type of behaviour was explained by a lack of a permanent resident status, and thus by a fear to lose the option of returning to the host country. Furthermore, these respondents can be called recent migrants, as their stay in Spain has not lasted for more than three years. This group consists of a quarter of all respondents. The second group comprises the migrants that visit Ukraine at least once a year, and this group was formed almost by a half of the interviewees. Free movement of these interviewees is afforded by the possession of residency status in Spain, which is the result of the long-term migration experience that, of course, provided these migrants with resident positions. Those that can still be identified as circular migrants, but rarely visit Ukraine (that is, once every 2–4 years),² formed approximately one fifth of the research participants. Eventually, the last group represents those Ukrainians who, in fact, have moved from category of circular migrants to that of permanent migrants.

Following a review of the literature on the study of immigrant integration, it was decided to take the following definition from Penninx of the concept of integration as “the process of becoming an accepted part of society” (2005:141). This definition focuses on two important features of the integration phenomenon. First of all, it stresses the process itself and it does not bring into focus the outcome of the process. Secondly, such a definition does not emphasize any particular requirements for acceptance raised towards newcomers by the established receiving society. This definition leaves open different intermediate and final outcomes or results (Penninx, 2005). Although there are a lot of different classifications of the integration process, the model of Heckmann (2005) has been chosen as it identifies the integration elements in a very deep way. Heckmann identifies the next four dimensions of the integration process: Structural Dimension, Cognitive-Cultural Dimension, Social Dimension and the Identificational Dimension. Within the **Structural Dimension**, process of the obtaining rights and an access to the

² According to Spanish law, illegal migrants need at least three years to get their residence status through a legalization procedure.

membership was studied, position and status in the core institutions of the host society (including citizenship or residence status, educational systems, training structures, the labour market, and housing). Through the **Cultural Dimension** framework, the process of the cognitive, cultural, behavioural and attitudinal changes of people is described. This dimension has an interactive character, as integration is a mutual process that changes not only the immigrants, but the receiving society as well. Variables of this dimension are, inter alia, knowledge of the language and culture of the receiving society, roles of the family, influence of gender, religious beliefs and lifestyle, and also which behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable in the host society. The **Social Dimension** is connected with the membership of immigrants in different organizations, clubs, associations, and communities in the host country. And the **Identificational Dimension** illustrates the sense of belonging and identification with a certain ethnic or national community.

Shifting the topic to the identification of the marginalization concept, first of all, attention should be paid to the concept of the “Marginal Man” developed by Park (1928: 892); for Park, the marginal man was a person “on the margin of two cultures and two societies, which never completely interpenetrated and fused”. These people, as a rule, will never break up with their past and their traditions as they are not quite accepted in the new host society. Developing this theory, Antonovsky (1956: 57) determined marginality through the confrontation between the host population and migrants. Although two cultures can stay in lasting contact, their cultural patterns cannot easily be harmonized. However, the boundaries between both groups are sufficiently permeable for the members of the marginal culture; therefore, it can internalize the patterns of the dominant culture, as well as those of their own. Furthermore, these relations are relations of power, as one of the groups is dominant in terms of power and reward potential. For instance, having acquired the goals of the non-marginal culture, members of the marginal group are pulled by the promise of the greater rewards offered. But on this road, they meet barriers as, on the one hand, they can be discriminated against by the host people, while, on the other hand, they may feel pressure of “betraying” the home culture. To continue the topic of power, it is important to move from the area of culture to the framework, or structure of society. For example, Powell (2013: 3) defines structural marginality as a “shift in focus from people and individuals to structures and institutions [...] When structures unevenly distribute opportunities or depress life chances along the axis of race, it can be described as structural racialization.” All these definitions and concept are called to assist in the defining of the processes that influence the life of the circular migrants.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES: INTEGRATION VS. MARGINALIZATION?

The history of modern migration flows of Ukrainians starts with the fall of the Soviet Union, and the collapse of the economic system that depended on the centralized structure of the Soviet economy. The first migration experience of Ukrainians was observed in the beginning of 1990s, and was characterized by the existence of petty trade and shuttle traders. After buying modest quantities of certain products in countries like Poland, Hungary, Turkey, and China, Ukrainians returned to their homeland and sold these articles, which became one of the ways to survive during the crisis of the 1990s. Labour migration became a mass trend in the late 1990s. The main countries of destination for Ukrainians were Russia (48.1% of total Ukrainian migrants), Italy (13.4%), the Czech Republic (11.9%), Poland (8%), Hungary (3.2%), Spain (2.7%), Portugal (2.6%), and other countries (Geyets 2009: 218). Moreover, it is important to mention that migration flows of Ukrainians are based on the principles of “chain migration”, and the case of Spain is not an exception. Taking into account the history and circular nature of migration of Ukrainians, it is still early to talk about a Ukrainian diaspora, especially in the countries of South Europe where the

majority of migrants represents the first generation. Although administrative data and different counts do not provide reliable information as to the labour migration of Ukrainians on short-term migration work trips to neighbouring countries, the World Bank estimated the number of Ukrainian labour migrants to be 5.1 million in 2013. Moreover, Ukraine was recognized as the largest recipient of remittances in the “Europe and Central Asia” region; for 2013, the number was \$ 9.3 billion, representing 4.8% of Ukraine’s GDP (World Bank, 2013).

Starting an analysis from the **Structural Dimension**, special attention should be paid to the topic of regular status and labour-market position, as these two components define the position and the place of migrants in the host society. Calavita (1998) considers that the regularization and legalization of migrants’ official status in Spain has led a lot of them to marginalization. The law and procedure of obtaining a regular status formed by legal bodies takes a lot of time, and makes migrants drop out of regular lawful/permanent residency. Waiting for a regular status and living under illegal conditions, migrants cannot get any official employment. It leads them to the informal sector of the economy that, in a long-term perspective can limit their open participation in the host society. For instance, although the majority of research participants have a regular status and can participate openly in the everyday life of the host society without any fear of being deported, most of the respondents passed through the irregularity in the new country. Almost all respondents were waiting for the legalization of their status in Spain, at least, for three years. Of course, all this time Ukrainians were involved in the underground economy as the situation of irregularity encouraged them to look for a job in the sectors available for irregular migrants, that is in the grey economy.

I think that if I had possessed legal documents at the time, I might have found something better. I had friends with documents who worked as waitresses in restaurants and bars, and earned twice as much. When I finally began work in a bar for 250 euros, I also handled the desk, served customers, relieved the cook, and cleaned tables. Still, the salary was only half of what I could have earned if I had papers, but I was happy because, as you know, unregistered workers are forced to accept any job offer. (woman, 38 years old, 10 years in Spain, pedagogue)

Furthermore, results of the research show that almost all respondents choose Spain and in particular the Basque Country because of the presence of friends and relatives there. According to the segmented assimilation of Portes (2001), the successful inclusion of immigrants into the host society depends on the social strata they join on their arrival in the new society. So, Ukrainians joined or entered the social stratum that was opened for them by other Ukrainian migrants or mediators of their circular project. And this stratum is the lowest labour-market level, or the lowest rung of the working class. Here, it is important to mention that the majority of interviewees are very well-educated people with professional backgrounds: for instance, a third of respondents are university graduates and only 10% of research participants have no special vocational training. In the home country, most of the respondents belong to the middle or professional classes. However, in the host country, Ukrainians joined a low level of the social structure, taking low-paid occupations in sectors of the informal economy. For this step, as a rule, respondents were forced, first of all, by the difficult economic and financial conditions of their families in Ukraine. As an example, it can be mentioned that although interviewees were occupying qualified and, sometimes, prestigious positions in Ukraine, their work, very often, was depreciated by low salaries, forced vacations or non-payments. Therefore, migration projects, usually, were seen as a way of avoiding poverty. This situation made a lot of interviewees close their eyes as to the type of jobs in the host country, as these occupations were, at least, remunerated. Research results show that a significant

majority of respondents do not work in the field that corresponds to their training and education. Among men, some found work according to their skills (mechanics, drivers, electricians, in IT, etc.); among women (economists, pedagogues, medical workers, etc.) this phenomenon is absent as almost all women work in the domestic cleaning sector. Being involved in the chain migration structure, Ukrainians went to pre-arranged places and entered an entry-ready system that was created by other immigrants. In this way, respondents could avoid a lot of difficulties connected with the lack of Spanish-language fluency, job-seeking and accommodation, etc. and minimize some risks connected with migration project. Therefore, it can be observed that the introduction of immigrants into the labour market was created by the network of Ukrainians and maintained by the local population.

Although the majority of respondents are not satisfied with their employment situation or occupation in Spain, Ukrainians, actually, are not quick to change this. With the example of the “U-shaped” model of professional attainment of immigrants in the host country, Chiswick, Lee and Miller (2005) explain immigrants’ initial downward mobility as a natural process due to the lack of the host language, social networks, and the specific knowledge/skills that are important for the host labour market. Nevertheless, the situation of immigrants can be improved by making investments into the host society: studying the host language, gaining a diploma in the host country, or getting new education or training in a field that is in the demand in the host country. But, obtaining new skills or training is a long-term process, whereas circular migrants are temporary citizens. They believe that their stay in the host country is short-term. The aim to return is one more reason for explaining this state of affairs, as the concept of “home” occupies a central place in the lives of migrants and is very often idealized. Bagnoli (2004) emphasizes that the dream of returning to the home country is always a vivid one for immigrants. This dream encourages Ukrainians to make their investments in Ukraine and prepare for their return. It makes them believe that their stay in Spain is temporary; therefore, it is not worth making heavy investments in the host country. Moreover, their stay and work in Spain are dedicated not to making their life better in Spain, but to make their life better in the home country of Ukraine. However, a negative side to this situation also exists, as this state of affairs produces de-skilling, low self-esteem among immigrants, and frustration. But on the other hand, participants were satisfied with their experience, and stressed that their migration project has brought at least some prosperity.

Indicators of the **Cognitive-Cultural** aspects of the integration of Ukrainian immigrants into Basque society demonstrate that the respondents do pay attention to the main factors of the host society. One of the most important indicators showing the integration of Ukrainians into the host society is knowledge of the host language (by host language I mean Spanish, as local language is Euskera). Ukrainians that participated in the research considered themselves to have an intermediate level of the Spanish language. Moreover, immigrants emphasised that command of the host language enabled successful communication with authorities and public assistance inquiries, contact maintenance with Spaniards, and even the establishment of new friendships.

Moreover, it is important to stress the cultural differences between Spanish and Ukrainian societies that are really significant. Respondents described a lot of examples of the “way things are done” in Spanish society, starting from liberal or free lifestyles to the details of work negligence or colourful fiestas. Actually, this scrupulous attention to social rules of behaviour is evidence that Spanish and Ukrainian cultures are truly different but, of course, this does not make the integration process any easier. It means that, very often, immigrants have to go through re-socialization processes in order to study the patterns of

behaviour that are acceptable and permitted in the Basque society. Some respondents compared the start of their life in Spain as a new beginning in life. Nevertheless, a third of the interviewees mentioned that they followed Spanish and Basque lifestyles, while almost a half of Ukrainians termed their lifestyle as “my own/personal” that, in reality, includes the features of both Ukrainian and Spanish societies. So, the majority of Ukrainians continue with certain customs and traditions from their home country, especially in the field of private or home affairs, but at the same time they recognize that also try to implement the best practices of the Spanish experience of life, for example, in the area of public life and social relations. Knowledge of these and other rules demonstrates that migrants do not close themselves in their own community, but stay in close contact with the host population. These results encourage people to make a conclusion about the positive indicators of the integration process.

Summarizing the results of the **Social Dimension**, it could be noted that Ukrainians do not participate in any organization, club, or association. The majority of respondents reported that they visit a Ukrainian church which they consider to be a local community. At the same time, it could be observed that Ukrainians keep close relations not only with compatriots, but also with local people. It might appear strange, but the majority of respondents do not seek out relations with migrants from other Socialist Bloc countries which could be said to be united with Ukraine by geographical proximity or cultural similarity. At the same time, research participants have in the network of their friends Spaniards and Basques. And one of the reasons of this state of affairs is not only in order to benefit from these relations, but because of the positive attitude of the autochthonal population that, in reality, reduces the costs of interaction. The level of acceptance of natives by the Ukrainians themselves has been established via the following point on the questionnaire: respondents were asked if they would accept a Spaniard/Basque into their family as a family member. It has to be reported that there were only two respondents from 41 who answered negatively, which, in fact, shows the degree of tolerance that Ukrainians manifest towards the local population. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that due to the economic crisis, the attitude of Basque people towards foreigners is changing, and Ukrainians observe this change as moving from the positive towards normal or negative attitudes. Respondents notify that this change is not a surprise, as a lot of local people have lost their jobs, and believe that foreigners occupy their possible job positions.

The last dimension that, as a litmus paper, illustrates the full picture concerning the integration of Ukrainian immigrants is the **Identificational dimension**. Through this dimension was identified subjective belonging of immigrants to some ethnic or national community. So, less than a half of respondents emphasized that they felt part of Ukrainian society, while the majority of research participants noted changes in their identification. At the same time, there are also a few interviewees who felt themselves part of the Basque society, while the majority of Ukrainians described their identification as belonging to both, or neither of the societies.

Nowadays, I feel some duality: I like the way of life in this country although there is really nothing significant to bind me to this place. At the same time, life is impossible in the homeland. In the unlikely event that the situation normalizes and it becomes feasible to open a business in Ukraine in a way that is possible here... but then there is the European culture, a way of life to consider ... if only Ukraine had a little of that, we would be living there now. How often we have talked about this, dreamed about it. Meanwhile, I have adapted to Spain, and at least I have a job here. (woman, 51 years old, 5 years in Spain, pharmacist).

This state of affairs illustrated that for these Ukrainian circular migrants, their position is on the border or on the margin of both societies. Although these people were termed marginal by Park (1928), this position also can be found in the literature as a position of “inbetweenness” somewhere between the home and host societies. Seweryn (2007), for example, calls this position a liminal stage, during which immigrants are open to the new experience of the host country. However, very often these migrants stay in the “relatively permanent conflict of the “divided self” that is, the old self and the new self (Park 1928: 892). Describing the identificational shift of immigrants, Seweryn considers the liminal stage to characterize those immigrants who have “left” their home society, but still have not become full-fledged members of the new host society. In this situation it is the reference group that will become a factor of great importance. This reference group will encourage immigrants to become closer to the host people, or conversely, will make them separate and lead them to marginalization. Anyway, the state of “inbetweenness” demonstrates that almost a half of research participants looked for their own place in the structure of the Basque society.

However, it is clear that the reference group for the majority of research participants will be the lower rung of the working class in the host society. Therefore, their integration into Spanish society will lead them to the underclass. Comparing their position in the home and in the host countries, Ukrainians include their status in the home country. Unwilling to accept this downward mobility, interviewees continue to bind their future with the home country, where their remittances can provide them better social position and some prestige. And here, it is not out of place to remember that marginalization and exclusion (both social and economic) are not only or primarily cultural issues, but are products of the law, while structural and economic imperatives secure it (Calavita 1998: 532). Therefore, it is possible to observe the marginalization of respondents caused not only by their position on the margin of both Spanish and Ukrainian societies, but also by their downward mobility in the host society.

I think that no one will say “I regret that I came”. I am very happy to be here ... misery ate away at me in Ukraine ... however, washing those toilets – five to seven a day – did upset me. (woman, 56 years old, foreman at a Ukrainian plant, 9 years in Spain)

Anyway, oscillation leads to damping and stopping. Although repeat migrants come to the host country in order to get additional earnings, there is no evidence or guarantee that these migrants finally return to the home country (Constant Nottmeyer and Zimmermann 2012: 23; Kaczmarczyk 2002:8–9). So, the main question that appears in this situation is: what will be the end of this oscillation – the home or the host country? One aspect that should be given attention in this situation concerns the plans of circular migrants towards family reunification. For instance, more than a half of respondents said they lived in Spain with a spouse or family members, while other research participants had left their family members in Ukraine. Skeldon (2010) believes that the provision of family reunification could deny the circular nature of migration. Moreover, he urges that the downside of this situation consists in taking into the borders of the host country a group of people without a right to settle, despite appropriate legislation on the protection of migrants. As a result, it will lead all these migrants to the underclass of the host society (Skeldon 2010: 28). Given that circular migration is considered to be an unmanaged form of temporary migration, it is complicated to control both the mobility of these migrants and also the processes of their unofficial family reunifications. In this situation, it can be only concluded that researchers (Skeldon 2012; Bedford, 2009; Mazzucato 2009) do not recommend using any restrictive mechanisms towards repeat migrants, as these states’ efforts will not lead to the stop

of circulation, but to the settlement of the circular migrants in the host country, whereas the possibility of circulation would continue or prolong the process of oscillation.

CONCLUSION

The case of Ukrainians in the Basque Country demonstrates that circular migrants also can be touched by the process of integration. For instance, Mazzucato (2009) believes that integration and circularity are not mutually exclusive concepts. Therefore, it must be recognized that if integration costs are not paid by the host country, they will be paid by other participants of this process, for instance, by immigrants themselves, who pay the main part of these costs. Still, it should be remembered that the host people with their positive or negative attitudes also have their own input into this process. Therefore, although circular migrants are not expected to become members of the host society, some research results, as, for example, Ukrainians in Spain or Ghanaians in the Netherlands (Mazzucato, 2009) show that a proportion of repeat migrants look for their place in the host society.

However, it must be recognized that this road of integration leads circular migrants to the marginalized groups of the host society. Taking into account their employment situation, repeat migrants join the lowest level of the social structure of the host society. Being conscious of this, Ukrainians show that they would not like to join such a social stratum. As a result, this situation causes closer contact of migrants with their native society, as they expect to reach a better economic and social position. Moreover, they expect that these earnings will compensate for discrimination, exploitation and other difficulties by improved status and prosperity in the home society. Therefore, circular migrants prefer the position of a “marginalized” member of the host society or an area of “inbetweenness”, as it seems to make their lives more comfortable, and does not demand any painful decisions. In other words, such a personal positioning in society assists migrants in coping with their cognitive dissonance.

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APPENDIX 1.

Plan of the Interview

- Motives for migration decision
- The reasons to choose Spain for migration project
- Time (years) of migration experience in Spain
- Main problems on arrival to Spain
- Presence of social network and social capital on arrival to the host country
- Presence of family members in Spain

Structural dimension

- legal status: citizenship, residence permit
- education, qualification, courses
- current job, job in Ukraine, job search: network of friends, relatives, compatriots, equivalence of education to the current job, discrimination in the workplace, exploitation (as health and safety problems, violation of overtime, wage and hour regulations, requirements for scheduling of breaks and others), validation of education and work experience in Spain, participation in trade union
- sources of life in Spain
- accommodation: neighbourhood, contacts with neighbours: Ukrainians vs Spaniards?; satisfaction of housing
- access to public services: schools for children, hospitals, etc., satisfaction with these services

Cognitive-cultural dimension

- Spanish language: understanding, speaking, writing; influence of language fluency on earnings
- Participation in associations, organizations (Ukrainian, Spanish)
- Interest in politics, newspapers, TV, TV programs, experience from contacts with Spanish administration/authorities,
- family, gender (would you accept a Spaniard/Basque into your own family? (as a family member: 1- strong no, 2- rather no, 3 - rather yes, 4- strong yes)
- religious beliefs (church, denomination), frequency of visiting
- lifestyle: similar to Spanish or Ukrainian?

Social dimension: participation, resocialisation

- Friends: Spaniards, Ukrainians, others,
- voluntary associations, local community, NGO, clubs, etc.: role in these
- “Spanish/Basque behaviour”, The “way things are done”, *attitude* of Spaniards/Basques towards yourself

- Contact with Ukrainians, contact with natives, cultural distance
- Internet: language of use, contacts (Ukrainians, post-Soviet, Spanish, etc), Ukrainian or Spanish mass media, information looked for

Identificational dimension

- Ethnic/National identification: a part of Spanish or Ukrainian society?
- A country for future. Plans for future.
- Attitude toward Spaniards. Attitude of Spaniards toward respondent General attitude to Ukrainians
- Relations with people of other nations/cultures
- Frequency of home country visits
- Recommendation of Spain to relatives, friends, etc.
- Plans for the future. Return plan. Plans relating to Ukraine
- Time expected to be/live in Spain (years...)

Basic parameters

- Male/Female
- Age
- Marital Status: single, married, divorced, widower/widow

THE ISSUE OF CENTRAL EUROPE IN MAJOR CZECH AND SLOVAK SOCIOLOGY JOURNALS:

SOCIOLOGICKÝ ČASOPIS/CZECH SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW

AND *SOCIOLÓGIA/SLOVAK SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW* BETWEEN 1990 AND 2000³

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the issue of Central Europe in the two main Czech and Slovak Sociology journals, *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review* and *Sociológia/Slovak Sociological Review*, in the first decade after the political change in 1989 (specifically from 1990 to 2000). By using the method of content analysis, and comparing Czech and Slovak Sociology journals in their discursive contexts, we try to answer the following questions. What was the position of the issue of Central Europe in the context of other research problems that were discussed in the journals? Who dealt with the issue, and how? Which Central European sociologists from abroad were published in the journals and what did they focus on? Did Czech and Slovak journals share some common features in the questions mentioned above (topics, authors from abroad, etc.), or rather, did divergences prevail? The issue of Central Europe occupied a relatively prominent place in both journals, but the approach was somewhat different. While the Slovak journal was dominated by the issue of nation and ethnicity, the main topics of the Czech journal were transformation and the sociology of politics. Also, the composition of authors of both journals as a whole and within the topic of Central Europe was different. A significantly higher proportion of foreign authors can be found within the pages of *Sociologický časopis*. *Sociológia*, on the other hand, features more domestic authors, and the foreign ones are clearly dominated by Czechs.

Key words

Czech and Slovak sociology, content analysis, sociological journals, Central Europe

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INTRODUCTION

The article deals with the issue of Central Europe in the two main Czech and Slovak Sociology journals *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review* and *Sociológia/Slovak Sociological Review* in the first decade after the political change in 1989 (specifically from 1990 to 2000). By using the method of content analysis, and comparing Czech and Slovak Sociology journals in their discursive contexts, we try to answer the following questions. What was the position of the issue of Central Europe in the context of other research problems that were discussed in the journals? Who dealt with the issue, and how? Which Central European sociologists from abroad were published in the journals and what did they focus on? Did Czech and Slovak journals share some common features in the questions mentioned above (topics, authors from abroad, etc.), or rather, did divergences prevail?

Since our focus is on Central Europe as an object of sociological research, we deem it necessary to firstly define what we mean by Central Europe, and how we study it as a variable in the surveyed journals. A number of social scientists, especially historians, but also political scientists and sociologists, tried to define precise boundaries of Central Europe. Most of them admit, or even emphasise, that the boundaries of Central Europe are variable, according to the principal criteria and the studied phenomenon. The prevailing opinion is that the boundaries of Central Europe are in a way arbitrary and changeable, but there still are good reasons for exploring Central Europe as a specific region, and pondering the question of its boundaries, though variability is one of their essential characteristics.

The Polish-American historian P. Wandycz (Wandycz 2011) limits his research to the “heartlands”, i.e. Poland, the former Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. The British historian T. Garton Ash (1999) defines Central Europe similarly. The Czech historian Jan Křen, in his synthetic work on the history of Central Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries (Křen 2005), calls this narrow definition a presentism. He defines the area of Central Europe of the last two centuries as the living space of six nationalities: Austrians, Czechs, Slovenes, Slovaks, Hungarians, and Poles. He also emphasises the mobility of the boundaries of Central Europe. In the 19th century, according to Křen, the core was formed by the Habsburg monarchy, and in the interwar period, it was the successor states. After the war, the socialist bloc became the centre, and after 1989, this centre was formed by the countries awaiting entry into NATO and the European Union. According to Křen, the so called “wing states”, i.e. Germany and Russia, cannot be omitted either. He considers the years 1948–1989 the period with the strongest Eastern influence. It was during this time that saw the coining of the term of East Central Europe (Ostmitteleuropa) (Křen 2005: 26–27). The broader concept is also favoured by the American historian L. R. Johnson, who, although he works in Vienna, actually represents a view “from outside” – like Garton Ash, who himself has travelled to Central Europe many times, but works in Britain (see also Garton Ash 2003). While Garton Ash, who focuses on modern or rather contemporary history, favours the concept of heartlands, Johnson’s work seeks to provide a historical overview from the end of the first half of the first millennium, and naturally tends to a broader approach. To the heartlands, which according to him represent East Central Europe, he also adds West Central Europe consisting of Austria and Germany, and also Slovenia and Croatia – small nations and independent states that are located on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, and were part of Austria and Hungary before 1918 (Johnson 2011: 6).

The concept of heartlands overlaps with the political concept of the countries of the Visegrad Group, which was introduced in the early 1990s by the political representatives of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.⁴ The Visegrad cooperation mainly covers politically supported cultural collaboration and student mobility, and is not just a matter of (since the division of Czechoslovakia) four countries anymore, but also focuses on other East European states.

The interest of sociologists and political scientists in contemporary processes (whether in terms of social transformation, modernisation, globalisation, capitalisation of the economy, participation of women in science, changes in political systems and party systems, political populism, nationalism, or the issue of minorities in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe) mostly focuses on specific countries within the former socialist bloc, whether it is the so-called heartlands (e.g. Adamski, Machonin, Zapf, 2001), or a wider block of post-socialist European countries, for the selection of which the post-communist experience is a key point. In this case, the focus is on the heartlands with the addition of a smaller (e.g. Hloušek, Kopeček (2004) added Slovenia) or larger number of other states. We often find not only the simple designation of “Central Europe”, but various terminological variations that combine Central and Eastern Europe.⁵

Sociologists are also interested in the view of ordinary people on the boundaries of Central Europe. A representative survey carried out in the Czech Republic in the middle of the analysed period showed that the residents of the Czech Republic positively assign, apart from their own country (90%), also Poland (80%), and Hungary (77%) to Central Europe. Slovakia was assigned to Central Europe by 60% of respondents, Austria by 58%, and Slovenia by 50%. Other European countries were classified either as part of Eastern, or Western Europe by the majority of respondents (Nedomová, Kostecký 1997: 87).

In view of the above concepts, we created two categories in our analysis: Central Europe and wider Central Europe. The former is based on the concept of heartlands, and is key to our text. In this category, we included texts that address social reality or sociological tradition in the V4 countries (except texts regarding the home country of the journal). We decided to also include texts about ethnic minorities of the V4 countries (i.e. Slovaks, Czechs, Poles, and Hungarians in other than the home country), and also about Germans and Roma because we consider these two minorities to be specifically relevant to Central Europe. The second category takes into account the overlaps outside the heartlands, but this text does not use it very much. The introduction of the key variable leads us to the methodology of our research.

METHOD

For the research, we selected the method of content analysis, and used the methodology that was developed and tested in the analysis of the interwar sociological journals (Janák 2011a, 2011b, Janák & Bereš 2011). The analysis of the journals was conducted in four phases. The first preparatory phase included a pilot study; the design of recording sheets for content analysis

⁴ The Visegrad Group was founded on 15 February 1991 at the international summit of Lech Walesa, president of Poland, Václav Havel, president of Czechoslovakia, and the Hungarian Prime Minister József Antall. The intention behind the summit in Visegrad, Hungary, was to symbolically build upon a similar meeting of medieval kings (Polish, Czech, and Hungarian) that took place in 1335 to support diverse cooperation of the three countries. By the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the Visegrad Group changed from a trio to the so-called “Visegrad Four” (History of the Visegrad Group 2014)

⁵ E.g. Keen and Mucha (2003), when examining post-communist Sociology, also add Russia, while Golenkova and Narbut (2003), when examining the origins of Sociology in Central and Eastern Europe, do not take Russia into account, and deal with Sociology in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Yugoslavia, referring to them as “countries halfway between the West and Russia” (Golenkova, Narbut 2003)

and their adjustment after the pre-research; an intercoder reliability test, and subsequent modification of operational definitions. In the second phase, mainly formal requirements were measured (number of articles, their size, type of text, authorship, origin of author).

The third phase focused on identifying the topic of the content, which is also the most sensitive part of the research. For these purposes, however, there is no topical typology of (not only the Czech or Slovak) Sociology applicable to the analysis of journals. Nor was it possible, especially given the different objectives of the research, but also for methodological reasons, to borrow the typology of the already conducted research of *Sociologický časopis* (Vohralíková, 2002), or typologies of journal content analyses from related disciplines (Holzer, Chytilík, Pšejka, Šindelář, 2009). In the third phase, variables were input in the recording sheets on the basis of a general topical typology (social reality, sociological tradition, sociological theory and epistemology, methodology of empirical research, other) that the authors had designed for texts identified in the previous phase as an article, essay, or longer text in the category “others”;⁶ the main topics of the texts were also recorded by capturing the content using a maximum of eight key words or phrases following a quick and systematic perusal of the entire text. In other words, the task was to assign codes to full articles.⁷

The final fourth phase of the research focused on the analysis of the codes assigned to the articles, and a deeper analysis of the arguments of some texts. Based on this, (by the encoding of codes) more general codes of a second order were inductively created, which we refer to in the text as the main subject areas. The variable “Central Europe” was indicated in this phase.

One of the main methodological problems of content analysis is the question of reliability of measurement. In the case of closed, dichotomous variables, and minimally varying variables, a simple calculation of Holsti's coefficient was used to determine the intercoder reliability: $R = 2S / (k_1 + k_2)$.

S is the number of identical selection of two coders in one variable. It is multiplied by two, and divided by the sum of selections (codes) of the first coder (k_1) and the second coder (k_2) (for details, see Scherer, 1998). Results may vary from 0 to 1, whereas according to Scherer (Scherer, 1998: 50), a satisfactory reliability is a value of 0.7 and above. None of the fundamental variables had a reliability lower than 0.85.

The methodological literature on content analysis provides a number of other more sophisticated methods of quantifying reliability (Titscher et al., 2003: 65; Bell, 2001: 22–24; Neuendorf, 2002: 141–165; Riffe, Lacy, Fico, 2005: 122–155; Scott, 2009: 347–349; Krippendorff, 2009: 350–357). In the present research, probably the most widely utilised “advanced” coefficient – Scott's π – was used especially in relation to the variables used to determine the topic (closed coding). Its value in determining the type of topic was 0.8.⁸

⁶ This category included, for example, open letters, editors' policy statements, reprints of speeches, correspondence, reprints of newspapers, etc.

⁷ For the encryption key, see the Annex.

⁸ All of them are based on the fact that they correct the above calculation with the value of an incidental match of coders. They then differ in the methods of calculating this incidental match, and its incorporation into the equation. Scott's π , Krippendorff's α , and Cohen's κ are used most often. But their use, or rather their interpretation to dichotomous, and minimally varying variables is problematic. All of these

Open coding defies simple quantification. Independent encoding with two coders, and a repeated joint discussion of the assigned codes led us to believe that the semantic variations of codes used to express the main subject of articles of similarly (i.e. sociologically) educated and adequately trained authors would be minimal. Differences in interpretation of what an article discusses are negligible at such a general level.

Codes of greater generality (i.e. names for the main subjects areas such as “Central Europe, “social transformation and modernization”, “spatial sociology”, “gender”, “family”, “culture” etc.) were created inductively by the authors of the essay. However, the assignment of individual cases (i.e. units, cells) to these codes was, again, exposed to a retrospective intersubjective reliability test, which produced values varying from 0.75 to 0.95.⁹ The used codes of greater generality, and operational definitions of key variables are listed in the Annex to the article.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOURNAL *SOCILOGICKÝ ČASOPIS*:

Sociologický časopis was created as a bimonthly in 1965. From the beginning to the present, the journal has been published by the Academy of Sciences, most of the time by its Institute of Sociology. The journal publishes studies of Sociology and related Social Science disciplines following a standard opponent peer-review process. Throughout its existence, *Sociologický časopis* has been the main periodical in the field of Sociology, although there have also been other sociological journals in the Czech Republic or Czech part of Czechoslovakia. In the 1980s, it was the journal *S-obzor*, which was unique in that it was probably the only underground sociological journal in the world; from the 1990s, it was especially the journal *Biograf*, which focuses on the qualitative research paradigm and the journal *Sociální studia* which is focused on monothematic issues. After 1989, the “management institutions” of the journal largely changed, and changes in the editorial institutions and their composition were actually taking place throughout the first half of the 1990s. In the first year of the examined period, the journal did not have an official editor-in-chief, but it was led by an editorial team headed by Jiří Musil (who later worked together with E. Gellner at the Central European University). In 1991, Jiří Večerník became the journal’s editor-in-chief. After 1991, the journal was managed by a smaller executive board and a wider editorial team. In 1993, that dualism ended, and was replaced by a smaller executive editorial team and an editorial board (Večerník 1993). In 1992, the first special issue in English was published and in 1993, the journal started to regularly publish two English issues and four Czech ones, or rather a temporary division into two journals took place – a Czech one and an English one. Jiří Večerník became the editor-in-chief of the English version and was succeeded by his earlier deputy Miloš Havelka (after 1994). In 2002, Prof. Havelka was relieved from his post of chief editor by Marek Skovajsa, and the journal was united again under the title *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review*, with two chief editors for the two different language versions. The practice of two English and four Czech issues, which had started in 1993, remained unchanged.

advanced coefficients are constructed to eliminate identical selection caused by chance. We used Scott’s π for measuring topic typology.

We have not tested the reliability of simple variables such as “name”, “number of pages”, “type of the text”.

⁹ A single article could be assigned multiple codes, and so the question is what can be considered a match of coders. When a match was defined as a majority match (e.g. when coder A assigned only two codes to the article, and coder B assigned the same two codes plus another code), the value of reliability was very high (0.95). In the opposite case, i.e. when only an identical code combination of an article within the scope of 30 categories was considered a match, the reliability was lower but satisfactory (0.75). An adequate degree of reliability is to be found between those extremes (0.85).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOURNAL *SOCIOLÓGIA*

The journal *Sociológia* was established in 1969 as a quarterly. Since 1972 to the present, it has been published as a bimonthly. Throughout its existence, it has been the only scientific sociological journal in Slovakia (contrary to the Czech Republic, there have been no specifically profiled sociological scientific journals in Slovakia). The journal *Sociológia* is published by the Institute of Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The journal publishes studies of Sociology and related Social Science disciplines following a standard opponent peer-review process. During the examined period (the 1990s), the journal had three chief editors (Vlastimil Bauch until February 1990, Ján Pašiak from March 1990 to February 1995, Ladislav Macháček from March 1995 to June 2004). After decommunification, which came about with a new editorial board and the chief editor Ján Pašiak in 1990, the journal was gradually changed and internationalised. After 1991, the journal started publishing extensive abstracts, a kind of a digest of the journal, in English. In 1995 and 1996, separate English issues were published, and since 1997, each issue no. 3 and no. 6 has been published in English under the title *Slovak Sociological Review*. In 1994, the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) included the journal in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI). Since issue no. 6 in 2007, it has been registered in the database ISI Current Contents.

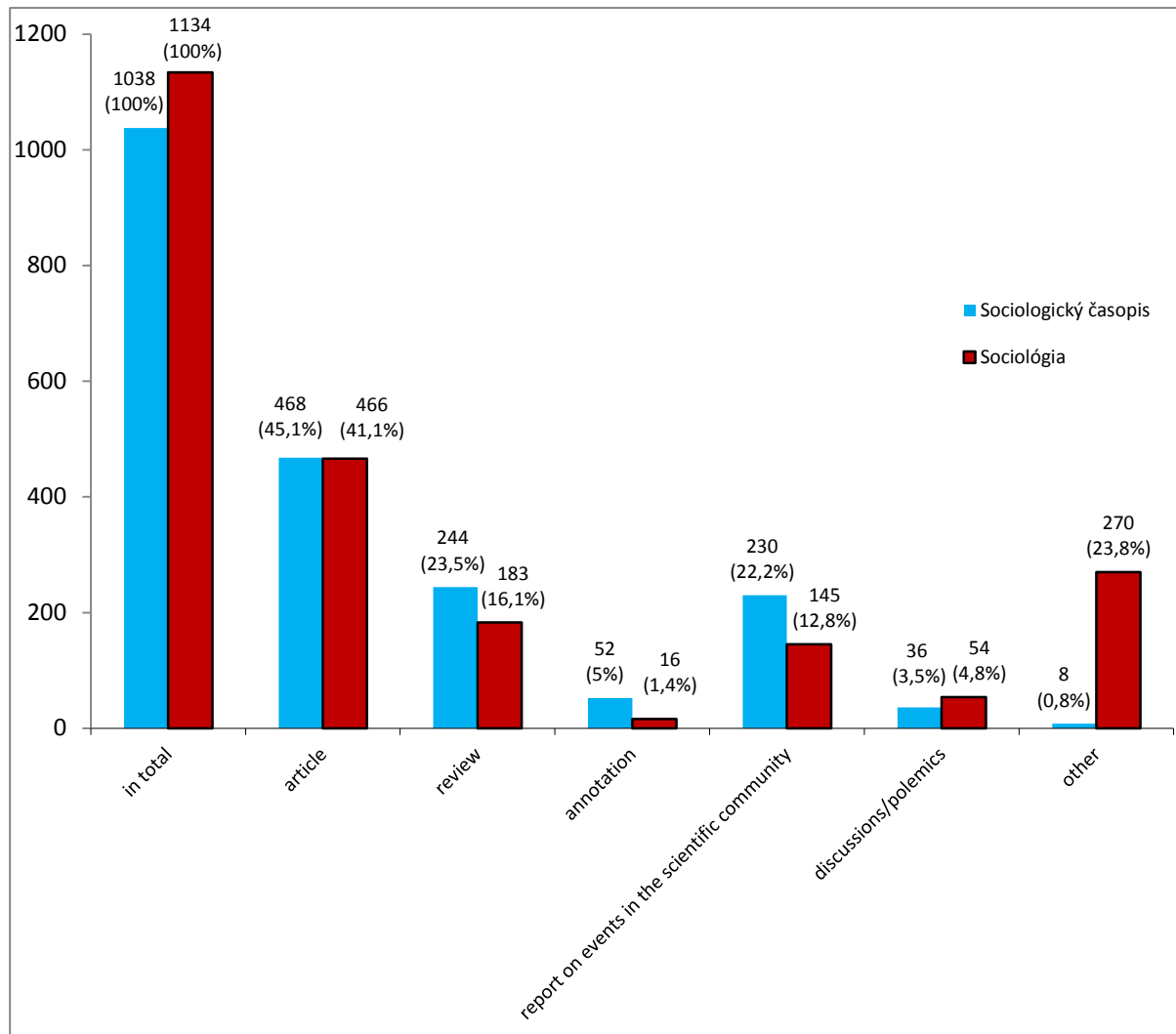
In the former Czechoslovakia (which in 1993 split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia), both journals were especially a professional platform for domestic sociologists. Czech and Slovak sociologists published less frequently in their colleagues' journal, but their authorship share was still significant (due to the similarity of the Czech and Slovak language, articles of Czech sociologists have been to this day published in *Sociológia* in the Czech language and vice versa). Prior to 1990, the journals contained only minimum contributions from foreign authors (and those were particularly contributions by authors from socialist countries). In the surveyed decade, the journals were trying to open up to Western Sociology, which was achieved especially by the Czech journal. The opening-up of the journals to foreign influence, however, can also be illustrated by reference to the gradual introduction of English issues, which, as was later shown in connection with the development of the internet, made the journal available to the international public too.

OVERALL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SET

From 1990 to 2000, the Slovak journal *Sociológia* published a total of 1,134 various texts stretching over about 9,593 standard pages. In the same period, the Czech journal *Sociologický časopis* published a total of 1,038 articles amounting to 16,738 standard pages. The above data shows that *Sociologický časopis* was significantly larger in scope (almost double) than *Sociológia*, while having fewer texts than *Sociológia*.

More interesting, however, is a comparison of the structure of the articles in the journals. As illustrated in Chart 1, both journals published about the same number of articles. *Sociologický časopis* published somewhat more reviews, annotations, and reports of events taking place in the scientific community, while *Sociológia* published more debates and texts included in the category "others". The different numbers in that category can be explained by the fact that the mentioned extensive abstracts of articles in English published in the years 1991–1994 were included in the category "others".

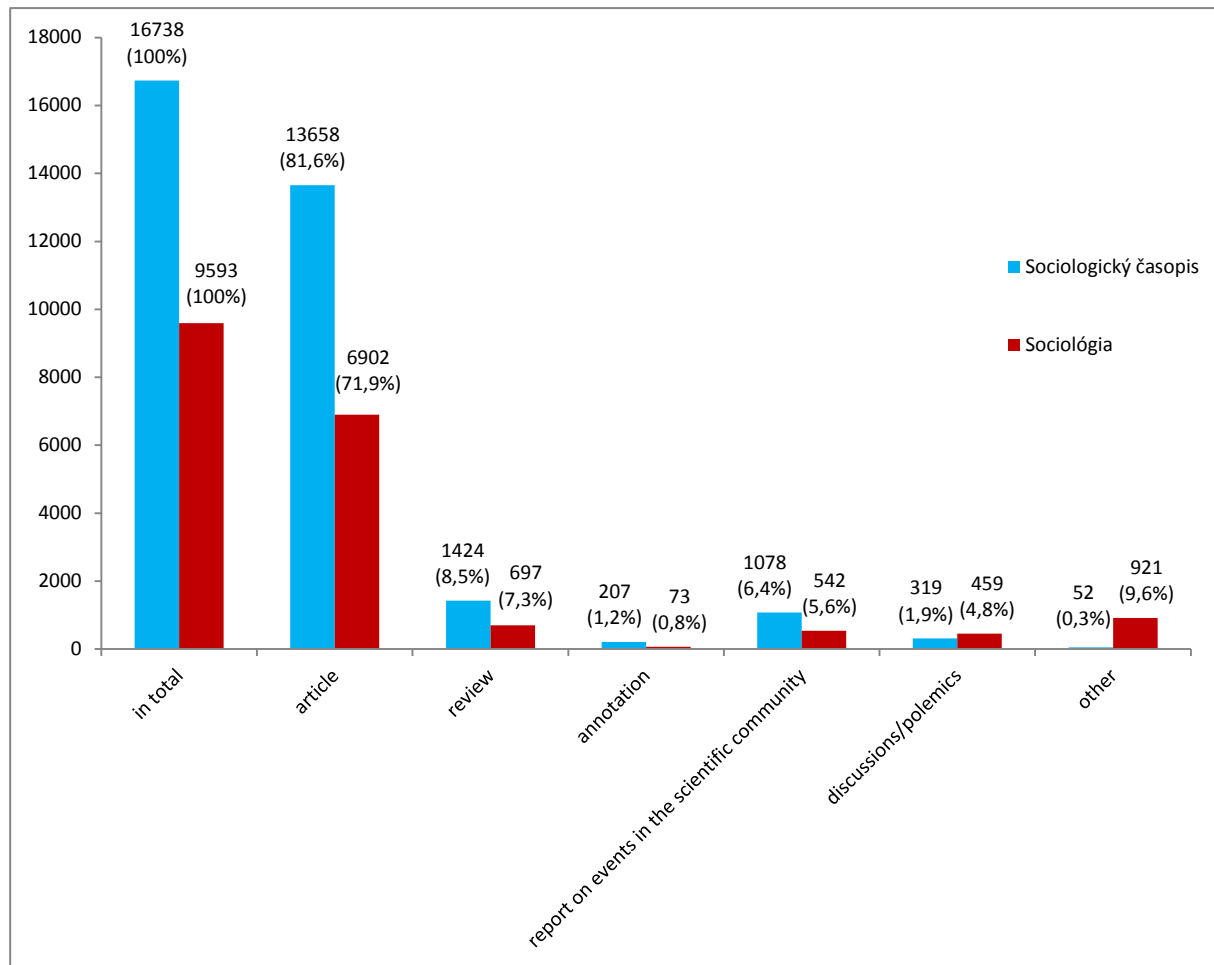
Chart 1: Overall structure of articles in *Sociologický časopis* and *Sociológia* in the years 1990–2000 based on quantity. Proportion of the total of articles noted in brackets as a percentage. Total number of observations = 2,558.



Source: authors

Comparison of the overall article structure in the journals according to their extent in standard pages is indicated in Chart 2. Comparison with the preceding chart shows that the average article in *Sociologický časopis* is nearly twice as long as in *Sociológia*, whereas differences in the number of standard pages in other categories approximately correspond to the quantities of published articles.

Chart 2: Overall structure of articles in *Sociologický časopis* and *Sociológia* in the years 1990–2000 according to standard pages. Proportion of the total of standard pages noted in brackets as a percentage. Total number of standard pages = 26,331.



Source: authors

TOPIC STRUCTURE OF THE JOURNALS

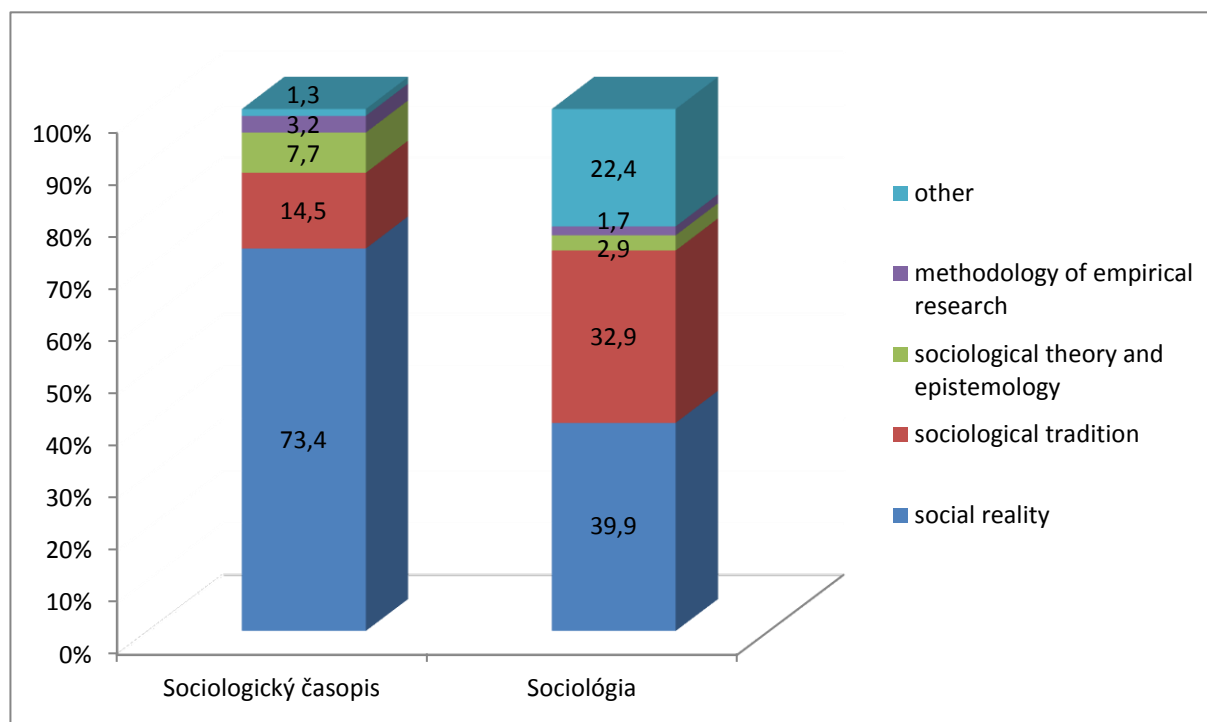
Also interesting is a comparison of the proportion of major types of topics (social reality, sociological tradition, sociological theory and epistemology, methodology of empirical research, other) in the analysed journal articles. Chart 3 shows that the Slovak journal *Sociológia* had a significantly higher proportion of articles categorised as “others” than the Czech journal *Sociologický časopis*. This difference can be explained by the editorial policy of *Sociológia*, which led to the publication of many shorter archived texts (whether documentary or commemorative ones) of older Slovak sociological authors. In 1994, for example, a monothematic issue of the journal (comprising nos. 1–2) was published, which contained 37 short archived texts by Anton Štefánek. Those texts are perhaps intuitively close to the category “sociological tradition”, but based on the definition of this category (see coding book in Annex), it is obvious that they cannot be included here.

Nonetheless, the comparison of the proportion of the articles’ main types of topics shows that *Sociológia* published significantly more texts on a sociological tradition than *Sociologický časopis*. In *Sociologický časopis*, on the other hand, the topic

of social reality was significantly more prevalent. The preference of primarily Slovak sociological tradition on the pages of the *Sociológia* can be explained mainly by the fact that up to that period, very little attention had been paid to the topic of history of Slovak Sociology. It was because history of Sociology in Czechoslovakia mainly focused on the Czech sociological tradition.

Equally of interest is the relatively small representation of purely theoretical and methodological articles in both journals. After the previous communist period that was dominated by sterile, official Marxist theory, one could expect an increase in the number of texts that responded to contemporary Western sociological theory. Instead, examination of social reality and the quest for sociological traditions prevailed.

Chart 3: Proportion of major subject types of articles (in %)
(Total of 468 articles in *Sociologický časopis* and 466 articles in *Sociológia*)



Source: authors

A basic overview of the frequency of articles according to the most frequent topics in *Sociologický časopis* and *Sociológia* is shown in Chart 4. This chart shows the main subject areas that were defined inductively by the authors of this study on the basis of already encoded texts. Using this coding, the most frequent topic in *Sociologický časopis* was social transformation (18.5%) followed by the sociology of politics (17.9%).

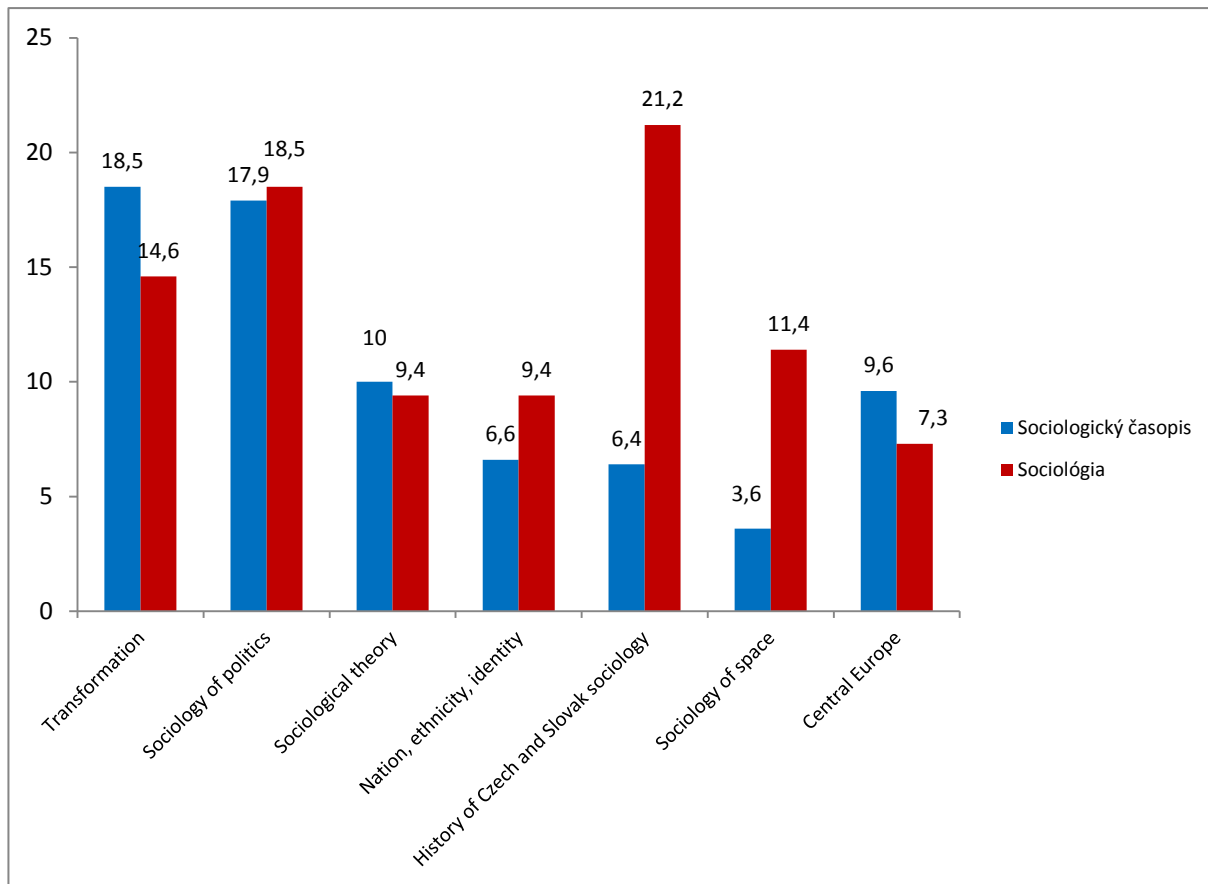
When looking on Chart 4, it might appear that a significant difference between *Sociológia* and *Sociologický časopis* is the great share of articles on the history of Czechoslovak sociology (21.2%). That is true, but not as strikingly as the chart indicates, since many texts on the history of the Czechoslovak Sociology in *Sociológia* were archived and thus had a very small extent. When looking at the most popular topics in *Sociológia* according to standard pages, the history of Czechoslovak Sociology ends up in third place (behind the sociology of politics, and transformation).

Another significant difference between *Sociológia* and *Sociologický časopis* concerns the fairly large share of articles in the field of Spatial Sociology. This area of sociological research has long-term significant representation in Slovakia. The founder of Slovak Sociology, Anton Štefánek, was one of the major representatives of sociology of the village, and also later, the research of settlements became a permanent significant part of this area of study.

In both examined journals, the issue of societal transformation was a frequent topic, which is understandable due to the major social changes which occurred. On the other hand, some later criticised that the articles on transformation from that period were often apologetic rather than critical and analytical (see Kusá, Búzik, Turčan & Klobucký, 2002; Búzik, 2005). This is related to the relatively low proportion of articles from the field of Social Pathology (*Sociológia* 8.2%, *Sociologický časopis* 2.8%). The exploration of numerous negative phenomena accompanying the transformation period, such as unemployment, poverty, crime, drugs, Roma settlements, corruption, and anomia, was not very prevalent. Czech and Slovak Sociology in the 1990s focused particularly on macrosociological problems associated with transformation and democratisation, and on new interpretative schemes from the field of Political Sociology. Frequent topics were citizenship and civil society, and the basic principle of democracy – free elections – was addressed quite frequently. In the post-revolutionary enthusiasm, it appeared to be necessary to defend democracy, and negative social phenomena quite understandably escaped greater attention of the Czech and Slovak sociological community.

Attentive readers may discover certain inconsistency of the data: Chart 3 shows a much lower proportion of the main subject type “sociological theory and epistemology” than the proportion of the main subject area “sociological theory” in Chart 4. The difference can be mainly explained by the methodology. While in the category of the main subject types (Chart 3), one article could be assigned only to one type, in the category of the main subject areas (Chart 4), multiple assignment of one article was possible, and texts that did not primarily deal with sociological theory were also included here. Our results, which suggest a relatively low share of primarily theoretical articles, are confirmed in the analyses of other authors (see Sopóci, 1995; Búzik, 1995; Kusá, 1997; Sopóci, 1997; Búzik, 1997).

Chart 4: Comparison of the frequency of articles in selected main subject areas in *Sociologický časopis* and *Sociológia* (in %)
(Total 468 articles in *Sociologický časopis* and 466 articles in *Sociológia*)



Source: authors

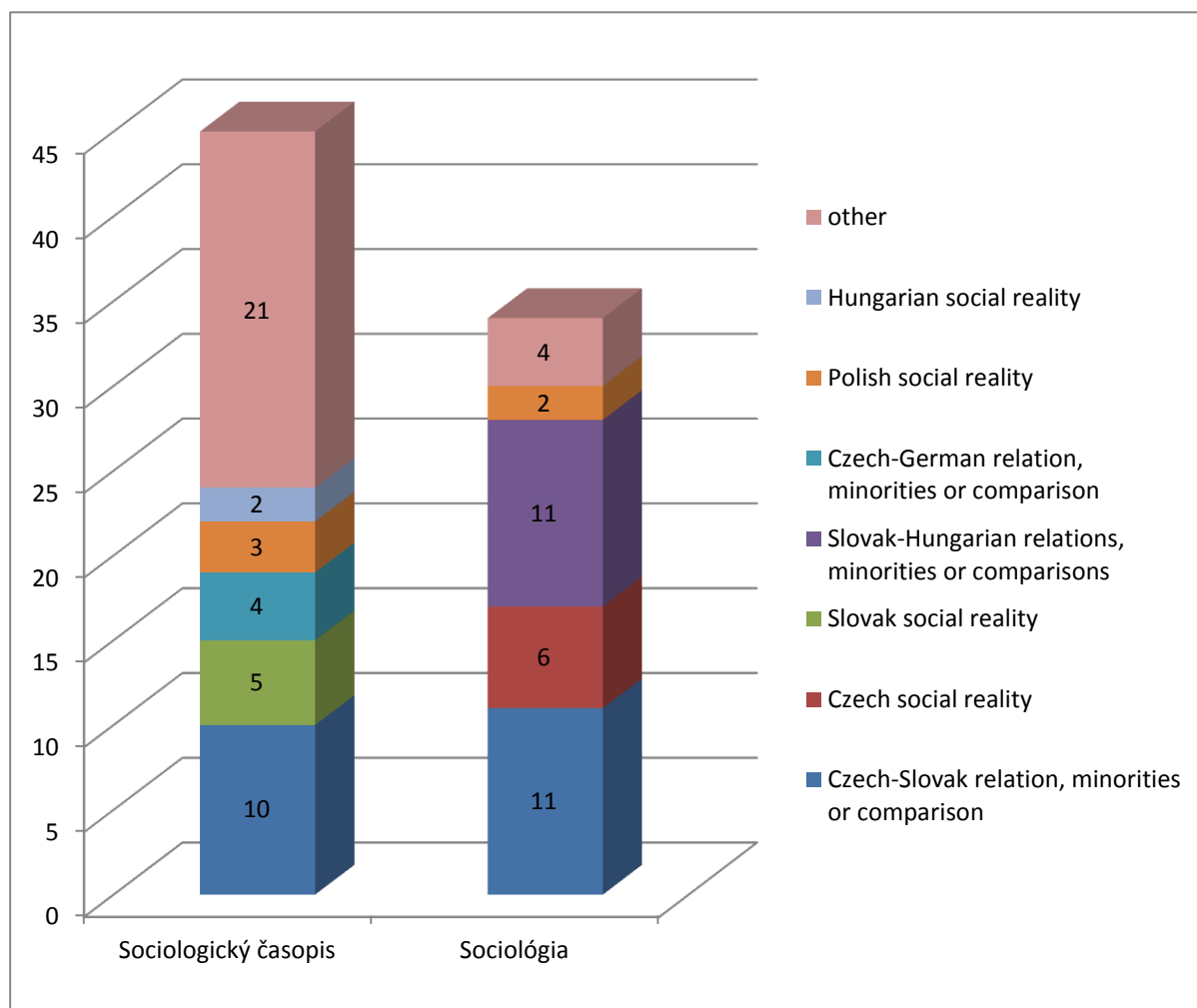
THE ISSUE OF CENTRAL EUROPE IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER SUBJECT AREAS OF BOTH JOURNALS

In the examined period, the journal *Sociológia* published a total of 34 articles on the countries of Central Europe (V4 countries), which is 7.3% of the total number of articles. In the Czech journal, it was about 45 articles (9.6%). Eleven articles in the Slovak journal were devoted to comparison of the Czech and Slovak societies, or Czech-Slovak relations, and six articles addressed the Czech social reality (Chart 5). The issue of Hungarian-Slovak relations, minorities, and comparisons was also contained in 11 articles, and two articles compared the Polish social reality with other countries. Other texts in this category focused rather generally on the area of Central Europe, or national minorities.

The Czech journal published ten articles addressing Czech-Slovak relations and comparisons, and the two countries were included in several broader comparisons. Five articles addressed the Slovak social reality. Therefore, in relative numbers, the Czech journal was a little less interested in the Slovak reality, but this is not so much due to a smaller interest of Czech sociologists in Slovak society, but rather by a smaller interest of Slovak authors in publications in the Czech journal (see below for the composition of authors). The proportionally smaller interest in the Hungarian minority in Slovakia was reflected in the Czech Republic by the issue of Germans and Czech-German relations (four texts). Aside from broader comparisons, issues of

Polish society were addressed in three texts, and two texts dealt with the Hungarian social reality. The proverb “near is my shirt but nearer is my skin” is typical for both journals, and topics regarding direct neighbours naturally take up more space than those regarding more distant countries.

Chart 5: Frequency of various national issues of Central Europe in *Sociologický časopis* and *Sociológia*.
A total of 45 articles about Central Europe in *Sociologický časopis* and 34 in *Sociológia*.



Source: authors

In terms of time development, the subject of Central Europe was most prevalent in the pages of the Czech journal *Sociologický časopis* in 1993, due to the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, and in 1992, when more general topics of transformation were in demand. Otherwise, an approximately equal number of variously oriented texts can be found here. The Slovak journal contained the largest number of articles dealing with the topic area of Central Europe in 1992 and 1999. In the first case, the subject of ethnicity, nation, and relations between nations was addressed, especially from the Czech-Slovak area. In the second case, it was rather an increased publishing activity of Czech authors about Czech realia in the Slovak journal (four of six articles).

The subject areas specified in the previous chapter (i.e. social transformation and modernisation, sociology of politics) were relatively closely associated with the issue of Central Europe (Chart 6). In the Czech journal *Sociologický časopis*, 14 articles from a total of 45 on the main subject area of Central Europe were dedicated to social transformation and modernisation. Given

the historical context of the analysed period, this is nothing surprising. Perhaps more interesting is the fact that only three articles from this subset were from authors of Czech origin; the same number were from Poland, two from Hungary, and one from Slovakia. Two articles came from authors from Western Europe (France, Norway), and two from the USA.

Another distinct subarea with a combination of two main subject areas was sociology of politics. Also in this case, almost one third (three articles) were Czech authors, Slovak authors sent two articles, one article was from Hungary, and the rest from Western Europe (Italy, Belgium, Norway, Great Britain). Those texts mostly dealt with political partisanship and elections. Paradoxically, the only explicit comparison of the V4 countries came from Belgium (Fitzmaurice, 2000).

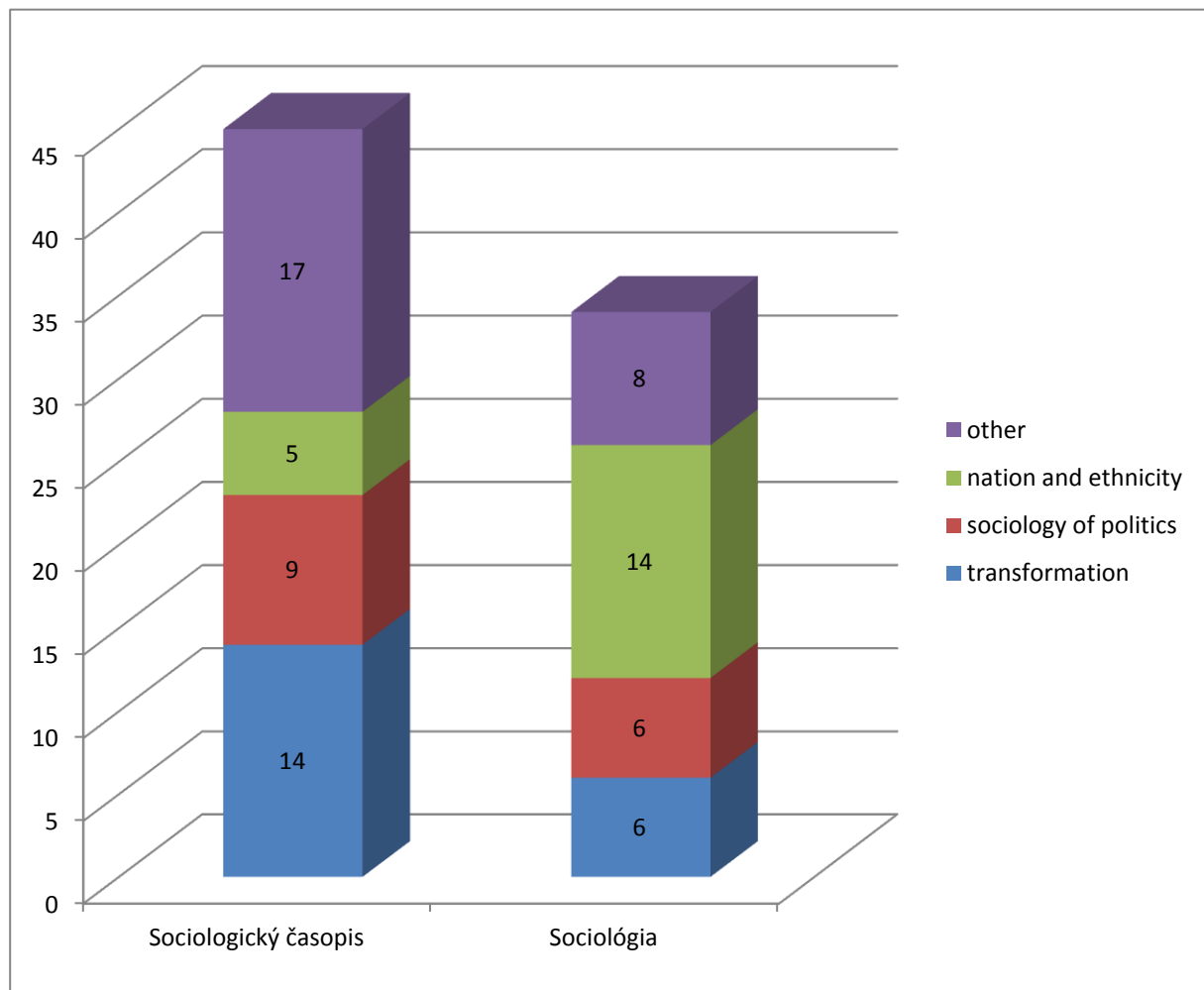
Another subarea of interest in Central Europe was social policy (seven out of 45 texts). To a certain extent (in three texts), this overlapping “mini area” was intersected with the main subject area of transformation and modernisation. However, this subarea is a little strange because there was no Czech author in *Sociologický časopis*, but contributions from other Central European countries (Slovakia, Hungary, Poland) and Western scholars (USA, Switzerland (in this case, it was the Czech emigrant V. Rys)) were gathered here.

Paradoxically, practically the smallest area of interest in the area of Central Europe on the pages of the Czech journal was formed by issues associated with nation and ethnicity (only five texts), whereas three articles were devoted to Czech-German relations, one to Czech identity, and one to Slovak identity in the context of Central Europe. With one exception of a British-Czech team, all authors were Czech.

In contrast, in the Slovak journal *Sociológia*, nation and ethnicity were the most common topic of articles on Central Europe, (14 out of a total of 34). Of those 14 articles, 11 were published in a relatively short period from 1992 to 1995, i.e. in the period when Czechoslovakia was dissolving, and nationalism was more pronounced in Slovakia. The monothematic issue of the journal 1992/1-2 certainly contributed to the relatively large number of articles on nation and ethnicity. Out of the articles on nation and ethnicity, four were devoted primarily to Czech-Slovak relations, four to Slovakian-Hungarian relations, and five articles addressed ethnic minorities in Slovakia (four) and the Czech Republic (one) more generally. The frequent presence of the issue of nation in the Slovak journal *Sociológia* can be explained not only by historical tradition (being the subject on which Slovak Sociology was established in the first half of the 20th century), but also by the current social situation. Apart from the above mentioned dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the increase in nationalism was also reflected by the deterioration of Slovak-Hungarian relations. However, what is also of interest in the examined period is that only a minimum degree of attention was paid to the Roma minority. A growing interest in this issue did not appear until the next decade.

Out of six articles of the Slovak journal *Sociológia* that dealt with transformation in relation to Central Europe, four compared different aspects of the transformation process in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, one compared the Slovak and Hungarian situation, and one addressed transformation in Central Europe more generally. Similarly significant (three texts of six) was the focus of *Sociológia* on the comparison of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the field of sociology of politics.

Chart 6: Frequency of various subject areas of Central Europe in *Sociologický časopis* and *Sociológia*. A total of 45 articles about Central Europe in *Sociologický časopis* and 34 in *Sociológia*.



Source: authors

COMPOSITION OF THE ARTICLES' AUTHORS

The overall structure of the authors of articles in *Sociológia* is shown in Chart 7. In the examined period, in terms of authors' background, *Sociologický časopis* was significantly more international, with almost a quarter (24.3%) of authors stating other than a Czech workplace, while *Sociológia* had only 16.5% of foreign authors.¹⁰ Significantly more Czech authors (8.2%) published in *Sociológia* than Slovak authors in *Sociologický časopis* (2.8%). This data confirms the long-term trend in which Slovak Sociology was more influenced by Czech Sociology than vice versa, and it appears that this condition persists even after the split of Czechoslovakia.

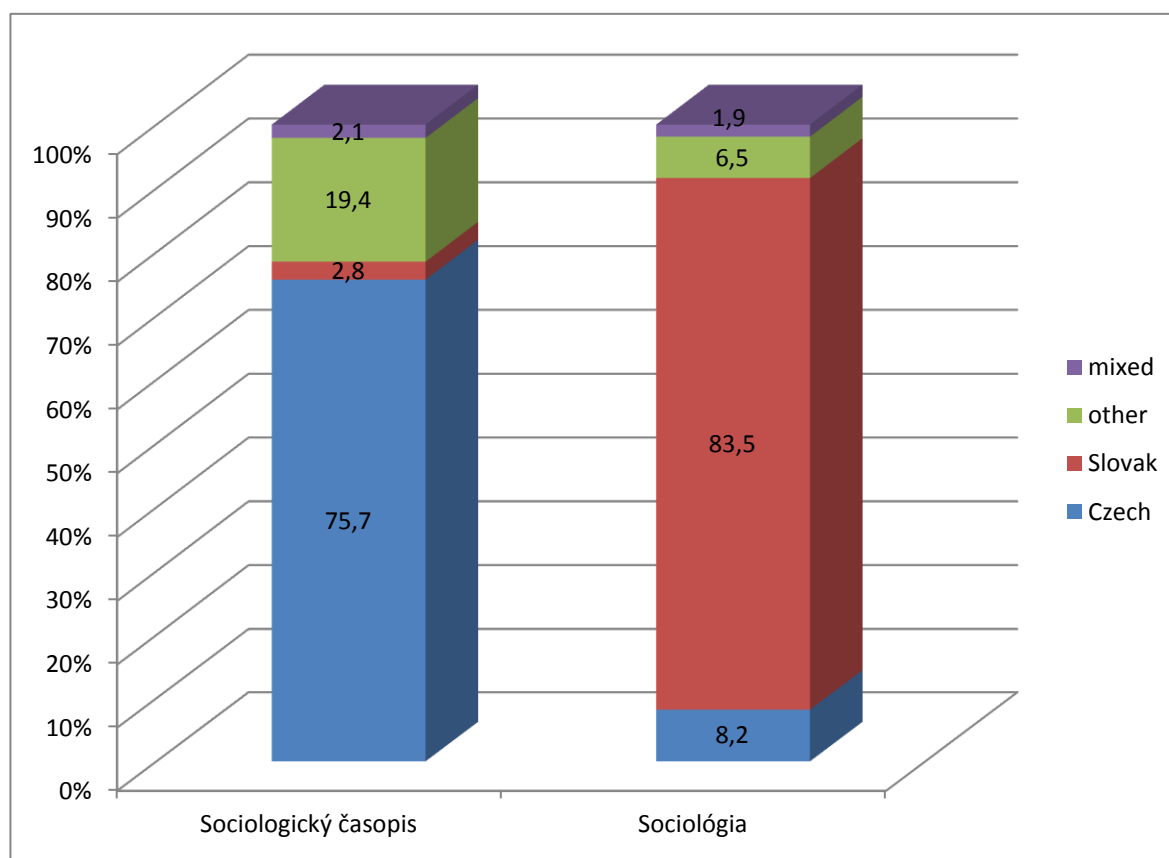
¹⁰ Authors' affiliation was determined by the institutional affiliation specified in the article. E.g. Czech emigrants living in Germany and working at German universities were encoded as German (i.e. foreign) authors.

A more detailed analysis of the origin of other than Czech and Slovak authors shows that the most frequent authors in *Sociologický časopis* were German¹¹ (4.5%), American (4.3%), and British authors (2.1%). In *Sociológia*, it was American (1.3%), Polish (1.3%) and French authors (0.9%).

The publication of sociologists from the other V4 countries (Poland, Hungary) was not very frequent in the examined journals. *Sociologický časopis* published nine (1.9%) articles by Polish authors and five (1.1%) articles by Hungarians. *Sociológia* published six articles by Polish sociologists (1.3%), and only two articles in which Hungarian authors participated within international author teams.

We also specifically studied collaborations on articles of authors from different countries of Central Europe. In the case of *Sociológia*, we recorded three Slovak-Czech, two Slovak-Hungarian collaborations, and one Slovak-Bulgarian-Hungarian-Polish-British collaboration. In the examined period, there was only one Polish-Czech and one Czech-Slovak article (always with the same Czech author) in the Czech journal.

Chart 7: Origin of authors of articles in *Sociologický časopis* and *Sociológia* (in %)
(A total of 468 articles in *Sociologický časopis* and 466 articles in *Sociológia*)



Source: authors

¹¹ German authors were often Czech political emigrants.

The main subject area of Central Europe in *Sociologický časopis* was strongly international in regard to authors. More than half of the articles in this main subject area were written by foreign authors (or co-authors): 27 out of 45 articles in total. The vast majority of authors adhered to a strategy of “one article on Central Europe in the journal is enough”, with the exception of three authors (Slovakia, Germany, Switzerland). Among all foreign authors, the strategy was similar: only ten of them published more than one text in the Czech journal, whereas in half of the cases, it was Czech emigrants.

In *Sociológia*, mostly Slovak and Czech authors were interested in Central Europe. Of the 34 articles in total, 15 were written by Slovak and 12 by Czech authors, and two articles were written by an international Slovak-Czech team of authors. Primarily members of international teams of authors were from other than Slovak or Czech origin – two Poles and one Hungarian. The publication strategy of *Sociológia* and *Sociologický časopis* in this area was similar: none of the authors had more than two articles here.

CONCLUSION

The performed analysis clearly shows that the issue of Central Europe (within the meaning defined by the operational definition in the introduction) belonged to relatively important subject areas in both journals; in the Czech journal *Sociologický časopis*, it was one of the top five main subject areas, and in the Slovak journal *Sociológia*, it was a bit lower (seventh place). However, the approach to the issue was not identical. While the interest in Central Europe in *Sociologický časopis* was dominated by issues of social transformation, sociology of politics, and social policy, in *Sociológia*, these areas were prevailed by a typical Central European topic – nation and ethnicity – which clearly dominates the Central European main subject area in the Slovak journal, while being rather marginal in the Czech journal. One explanation of the interest of Slovak Sociology in this issue is the increase in nationalistic tendencies and ethnic tensions in Slovak society in the 1990s and the related effort by Slovak sociologists to examine that phenomenon.

But in general, in the decade after the fall of the communist regime, most space both in *Sociológia* and *Sociologický časopis* was, unsurprisingly, occupied by the main subject areas of transformation and sociology of politics. These topics, which tried to capture the major social changes, had appeared in the Czech and Slovak Sociology before 1989, especially in texts opposing the regime. After the revolution, they became a dominant part of the Czech and Slovak Sociology. Later, however, texts on the transformation and modernisation of society from the 1990s were criticised because they insufficiently addressed the social basis of transformation, but also in general the “uncertainties, pathologies, tensions, and crises” produced by modernisation (Búzik, 2005: 11), and also because of “the lack of discussion and the fact that the texts primarily dealt with obstacles of transformation, and not its carriers [...] encouraged naturalisation of transformation to the notion of ‘historical necessity’” (Kusá, Búzik, Turčan & Klobucký, 2002: 525).

Also surprising is the fact that the subject of social deviancy and social problems did not appear in either journal more often, and certainly not in the context of Central Europe. It seems that sociologists succumbed to the illusion of the “transformation idyll”, and were not very interested in negative social pathologies. Whether any disillusionment, or shifts and changes of the Central European reality on the pages of sociological journals in the following decade took place, that is a question for another essay.

A particularity of the Slovak journal is the relatively large space that is dedicated to the history of Slovak Sociology. The popularity of this main subject area is explainable by the fact that it had been a relatively rare subject, and also by the need for the creation of an historical identity of independent Slovak Sociology, which was no longer regarded as part of the Czech, or Czechoslovak Sociology.

For obvious reasons of linguistic, cultural, economic, spatial, and historically political proximity, both journals devoted quite a lot of space to Czech-Slovak relations and the social phenomena of the neighbouring country. Relatively more space was devoted to this area in *Sociológia*, but rather due to an increased publishing activity of Czech sociologists in Slovakia than Slovak sociologists in the Czech journal. This brings us to the question of the composition of authors in the journals.

A greater number of foreign contributions in absolute and relative terms can be found in the Czech journal *Sociologický časopis*. Regarding Central European issues in both journals, the topical subareas of Central European social and political transformation, policy, and social policy were very internationalist (i.e. with a large contribution from foreign authors). However, while in the Czech journal *Sociologický časopis*, contributions by foreign authors made up a dominant part of the main subject area of Central Europe as a whole, the Slovak journal *Sociológia* was dominated by domestic authors and also a high number of Czech authors. This data suggests that the internationalisation of *Sociologický časopis* happened more quickly than with *Sociológia*. Whether the results of such a comparison are also valid in the entire scientific discipline in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, should be subject to further analysis. The relationship between Czech and Slovak Sociology, which can be primarily described as a relationship of a donor and a recipient for most of the 20th century, explains the larger publishing activity of Czech sociologists in the Slovak journal.

Regarding the cooperation of authors within Central Europe, there are very few joint texts by authors from various Central European countries. In the examined period, the Czech and Slovak journals were characterised by a strong affinity towards the West. It turns out that the opening up of Czech and Slovak Sociology after the fall of the communist regime was focused primarily on the sociological powers of the Western world, and cooperation with the Central European neighbours was less developed. Due to the synchronous transformation processes and underutilised possibilities of comparative analysis in the area of Central Europe, we can also talk about a historically squandered chance.

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APPENDIX – CODE BOOK

Analytic units

The analytic unit was defined as any text that has an identifiable beginning and end. A unit was any article, review, summary, report, announcement, or appeal to readers. If a longer article or treatise was published in installments, each part was treated as a separate unit with its own number. Bibliographic summaries or special columns devoted to reviewing foreign academic journals were treated as one unit, even if more than one author usually worked on them. Not treated as units were advertisements, tables of contents, title page, descriptions of a technical nature (such as who designed the cover or printed the journal, or who is a member of board of editors). Also not regarded as a unit were general introductory paragraphs describing the nature of the section to follow. A foreign-language abstract, summary, or translation of a printed text attached to the text was not regarded as an independent unit, but as part of the text of the article.

Size (cardinal variable)

Operational definition: The coder counts the number of pages the text takes up in the journal. Pages not fully covered with text are quantified into three approximate categories (using simple paper measurers):

up to 0.3 (less than 1/3); not converted to standard pages (or coefficient 1)

roughly 0.5 (more than 1/3 and less than 2/3); not converted to standard pages (or coefficient 1)

0.7 (over 2/3); coefficient of conversion to standard pages depending on print type and page format.

Type of text (nominal variable)

Values of variables: 1=article; 2=review; 3= summary; 4= report on events in academic community, 5= discussion/polemic; 6=other

Operational definition: Sorting of units into categories should take place on the basis of quick skimming of the contents of the individual issues and possible skimming. Most of the journals are similarly organized into sections, and questionable cases can easily be identified and classified.

- Category 1 – article: includes not only standard research treatise, but also significant anniversary profiles longer than two pages, as well as published research projects and summaries of original research.
- Category 2 – reviews: includes not only the standard reviews, but more extensive discussions – reports on a periodical or research report, or a multiple review of more than one book.
- Category 3 – summaries: brief reports on academic literature shorter than one third of a page. Also, bibliographical summaries of literature (defined by topic, language, or otherwise) in which the discussion of an individual item is less than a third of the page. If a bibliographical overview takes the form of a single block (for example several pages of references to sources on American Rural Sociology), then it can be regarded as a single unit which is a summary of over three pages.

- Category 4 – reports on events within the academic community, including reports of an institutional character such as information on conferences, seminars, the opening of research institutions, the starting of a research project (provided the report does not go deep into the content or discuss results, and anniversary profiles shorter than two pages).
- Category 5 – discussion/polemic: a text, the main purpose of which is to critically react (either positively or negatively) to the opinion of another contemporary researcher, and is not a review; a text published under the heading of discussion/polemic, or one that explicitly calls for discussion on some then-current topic in the academic community
- Category 6 – other: a text that does not fit into any of the above categories, for example official announcements, open letters, short interviews, etc.

Subject type (nominal variable)

Values of variable: 1 = social reality; 2 = sociological tradition (sociology); 3 = sociological theory and epistemology; 4 = methodology of empirical research; 5 = other

Operational definition: The procedure in determining the subject of an article begins with analysis of the article's title and reading the summary, if there is one. Every article is analysed using the method of systematic speed-reading, consisting of reading the beginning and end of every paragraph. The first and last paragraphs are read in their entirety. In case of doubt, the coder repeats the entire process in more detail. Determining the subject type of a standard article should take about five minutes.

- Category 1 – social reality: The category of social reality includes every article related to some empirically defined or definable social phenomenon (for example "Family and the Syndicate", "Research in the Village of Velká nad Veličkou", "Primitivism and Criminality from a General Standpoint". The category of social reality includes all articles about empirical research, but also more generally handled topics (theoretical treatises) referring to an empirically-defined topic.
- Category 2 – sociological tradition (Sociology): This category covers all texts about sociologists or various schools or currents of sociological thought, or discussion of some domestic or foreign academic issue.
- Category 3 – sociological theory and epistemology: Sociological theory means non-empirical topics, conceptual analysis (for example, "On the Dispute over Social Phenomena"), general sociological theory, epistemological essays of a speculative nature.
- Category 4 – methodology of empirical research: This category includes texts on sociological method and methodological problems of empirical research (for example, "Experimental Method in Social Sciences"). These are not publications of research results.
- Category 5 – other: this category takes in thematically unclassifiable texts.

Topic (string variable)

Value of variable: verbal label consisting of up to eight words/word combinations

Operational definition: the task of the coder is to create a label that captures the topic and content of the article. The goal of further analysis will be an attempt to create broader categories (combining them into thematic blocks). The procedure in determining the theme of the text begins with analyzing the title of the article and reading the summary if there is one. The

article is always gone over using the system of speed-reading, consisting of reading the beginning and end of a paragraph and seeking key points in the text. The first and last paragraph of the article will be read in their entirety, as well as the key passages. If the nature of the text cannot be clearly determined, key passages must be identified by repeated speed readings, which should result in a definitive labelling of the content. The resulting label should be a kind of key word or word combination for the article that accurately captures its contents. The time necessary to determine a standard article should be about 10 minutes.

ABSTRACT

In the state socialist system sociology could establish its reason for existence and construct its identity by merely emphasizing the objectivity of its scientific investigations (since to the „real” processes even the power had to pay attention). In this role-interpretation – that can be called ‘socialist modernity’ – the missionary zeal of science, its faith in development, scientific objectivity and in the cognizability of social reality concealed the inevitable, indirect effort of the ideology of power. The discipline has built up its myths in accordance with that concealment. The conclusions of historical studies on state socialism – seemingly well grounded and referenced – are often not only based on the phenomena examined but are also coloured by the period’s accepted conceptual framework. Our present knowledge about the society of the era is, to a large extent, based on these concepts, too. It is this lack of conceptual self-reflection with regard to historiography that explains why several historians believe they are discussing social reality, but are in actual fact only interpreting categories formulated in the wake of various party decrees. Unless we are able to uncover the effects of the identity policy that worked to create the virtual reality of state socialist society, unless we recognize the nature and operation of the various discourses of power and science, we cannot reach a reliable understanding of the period’s phenomena.

Key words

social history, historiography, conceptual history, stratification, structuration, mobility, modernization, acculturation, everyday life, revisionist historiography, Alltagsgeschichte, Eigensinn, autonomy

¹ Eszterházy Károly College

² This essay is based on a paper by the author published in Hungarian in the *Korall* Journal for Social history. *Az értelmezés hatalma – a hatalom értelmezése. Az 1945 utáni társadalomtörténet fogalmi nyelvéről.* [The power of interpretation and the interpretation of power: on the conceptual language of Hungarian sociology after 1945] *Korall*, 2005 May 19–20. pp. 37–52.

ON SOCIAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Synchronicity between social processes and the scientific discourses on them should not be necessarily sought after. It takes time for science to be able to conceptually depict a phenomenon through its own repertoire of methods. However, constructed categories can survive the period by virtue of their role in scientific investigation. As Durkheim stated: “these notions are closer to us and more within our mental grasp than the realities to which they correspond, we naturally tend to substitute them for the realities, concentrating our speculations upon them. Instead of observing, describing and comparing things, we are content to reflect upon our ideas, analysing and combining them. Instead of a science which deals with realities, we carry out no more than an ideological analysis.” (Durkheim 1982: 60.)

According to the well-known critique, not only theories and methodologies of traditional social history, but also its positivism was endeavoured and taken over from social science; which itself was shaped by natural scientific thought. Social stratification, thus, was described in terms of distinct conceptual models; where metaphors, as they are to describe (social) structure, are frequently borrowed from geography or architecture. These metaphors imply that the dominating structure of society is that of a hierarchy. Consequently, several historians frequently refer to “lower,” “upper” social “strata” and “classes,” and speak of the relations between “base” and “superstructure,” where individuals are differentiated by their proper social groups. These social groups are many times depicted in a static, stationary state, which is similar to the terminology used with geological strata; as though contemporaries had actually been in a spatially definable position, and could be described via the metaphors of “up” and “down” (Burke 1994: 58).

It has been repeatedly pointed out that, in contrast with the hierarchical view, the value of social positions is highly relative.³ It has also been underlined that by describing social stratification and social change via the above-mentioned concepts (class, stratum or social mobility), historians tend to automatically approve of the existence of such a hierarchy without presenting case-oriented empirical proof thereof. The general claim is that traditional social-history writing can be taken as a product of modernity and thus mirrors a view embedded in modernism; meaning the reign of “great emancipatory narratives,” and the application of such theoretical/conceptual constructions that are alien to contemporaneous “realities” of ordinary people (Joyce 1995).

The portrayal of a given historical phenomenon is highly dependent on those processes in action that, many times also ideologically, affect historians of the time. The need to answer the question as to what relation can be found between the conceptual language of social history and phenomena experienced in the world of contemporaries has made historians reconsider their own terminology (concepts and interpretations). The artificial nature of these historical categories have recurrently been pointed out: namely, that the portrayal and interpretation of these concepts alter in correspondence to the subject of research or the researcher’s interest. (Fox–Genovese–Genovese 1988; Wilson 1993: 18–19; Novick 1990: 440; Wehler 1988: 143).

³ This kind of reflective writing also has a tradition in the Hungarian social sciences. For example, in the beginning of the 20th century, Lajos Leopold claimed that the notion of ‘prestige’ originally meant ‘legerdmain’, and in order to get a better understanding of the behaviour of the (upper) social groups he denied automatic adoption of their self-representation (Leopold 1910). Similarly, István Hajnal (1943) and Ferenc Erdei (1980), among others, also articulated such a reflective attitude towards the adapted social terms and concepts in their works, in the first half of the 20th century.

The ways in which historians portray society in a given era are only detectable through the recognition that social-history writing is at all times temporarily fixed. Reinhart Koselleck articulates this claim as follows: “The live tension between actuality and concept re-emerges, then, at the level of the source language and of the language of analysis. Social history, investigating long-term structures, cannot afford to neglect the theoretical principles of Begriffsgeschichte.” (Koselleck 2004: 92.) The purpose of this study, after an introduction on conceptual history, is to give an overview of how our knowledge concerning state socialist society has been constructed, and to seek out ways in which this knowledge may be revisited.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION – ON THE INVESTIGATION OF SOCIETY

Stalinist model: two classes, one stratum

Social historians researching the history of former state socialist countries must face the phenomenon that language and concepts used in the period are strongly permeated by the ideology of the previous system. It is understood that in the state socialist system, the investigation of social stratification was an essential question that also affected the very legitimacy of the system. Thus, for a long time – in the 1950s – it was exclusively the domain of ideologists and propagandists. (This phenomenon – the impact of state ideology on the representation of the society – can also be analyzed through the example of western capitalist countries. However, I suggest that there is a fundamental difference between the political impact of a democratic and that of a non-democratic state ideology.)

Although, prior to the Second World War, the status of the peasantry, poverty in the county, and the role and composition of the middle classes were subjects of discussion, these problems officially ceased to exist after the formation of the state socialist system. As long as the dominant theory, which spoke only about homogeneous social groups, two classes and one status group (i.e. the working class, the co-operative peasantry and the intelligentsia) remained predominant, statistical investigation of social differentiation was next to impossible. (According to the Stalinist model, in “socialist society” two classes and one stratum could/must be distinguished: the working class standing on the basis of state property, the peasantry organized on the basis of co-operative property and the intelligentsia allied with them.) Contemporaneous representations of social conditions were written in the spirit of the worker-peasant-intellectual trinity, so these are obviously the products of a power discourse. Consequently, in Hungary, sociology could only exist after the 1960s (Szántó 1998, Tamás 1988: 455–480.)

New concepts, survey methods and practices

Starting from the 1960s, a new theory of classification (which divided work-character groups) and a number of investigations on mobility led to remarkable changes in social research. András Hegedüs⁴ (1964), was the first to make the “two-class and one stratum” model, based on property relations, a subject of criticism. Hegedüs claimed that such a model is only applicable to capitalist society structures. Zsuzsa Ferge (1966) held a similar claim, affirming her argument through an empirical study based on household statistics from Central Statistical Office. Ferge’s conclusion was that it is no longer relations of

⁴ Before András Hegedüs held numerous academic posts and worked in various research institutes as a sociologist, he was chairman of the Council of Ministers from 1955 to 1956. Later, after 1968, he became an opposition figure in the Kádár-system.

property that found social stratification, but much rather the position taken in the social division of labor (Szabari 2002). This positioning served as the base of work-character groups, which she did not associate with occupation groups and did not explicitly render into an order of hierarchy: according to the 1963-stratification data, she distinguished seven active work-character groups and a single passive one (referring to pensioners). The question as to whether the work was physical or intellectual was fundamental in defining certain work-character groups (Ferge 1969: 77–85). Correspondingly, sociologists held “social labour division” to be the most prominent force in social differentiation and social group formation (Ferge 1969: 78.), the stance of which eventually left other possible aspects disregarded. The former Stalinist model had constructed *social structure* on the basis of class relations. The subsequent model of *social stratification* described the society from different angles, but mainly from the perspective of occupational structure.

These groups (categories) were also called strata, most probably because sociologists wanted to set up an alternative structure-descriptive model in place of the Marxist-Leninist one, which was class-structured, and under state ideology was much depleted and also subject to careful criticism (at the same time they also tried to adopt Western theoretical views, especially sociological stratification models). However, Rudolf Andorka rightly argued that the above-mentioned stratum-model still best resembles Max Weber’s labour-division based concept of class.⁵ The theory of the stratum-model was criticized from a “Marxist” point of view for its alleged challenge to state ideology and the power of the working class. Born as an independent discipline, Hungarian sociology was criticized many times by the party leadership for its “uncritical relationship” to Western sociology.⁶ However, these stratum-model investigations proved convertible into the conceptual language of the reigning ideology. Statisticians were thus able to view the categories of worker, peasant and intellectual under a new theoretical light. As sociology found a common language with the ideologists of the Kádár system, it seemed to be in a mediating position between society and the government (and to keep this position, it was compelled to conform to dominating ideologies).

In 1974, the party leadership proclaimed a regulation over the definition of “working-class” and defined a statistical grouping system to be used when scrutinizing social stratification. It has been once again declared that “the working-class is the leading force in our society; it is the ultimate power and its power is realized through a union with the peasantry.” The definition of the working class, therefore, was fairly vague: all physical employees from both state- and co-operative industries were categorized under it. Workers in agriculture, commerce, health care, culture and even white collar workers in production fell into the working-class category. It did not take much, consequently, to prove the “leading power” of the working class and thus underline the legitimacy of the “workers’ party”: “from the full amount of the employed, there are two million six hundred thousand workers, 250,000 overseers and technicians and half a million worker-pensioners; therefore, the total number of workers in Hungary is three and a half million.”⁷ House-hold statistics were, therefore, also carried out in accordance with the state party’s ideology and its conceptual trinity (worker, peasant, intellectual).⁸ In practice, the usage of such vague categories meant that actual statistical data was ideologically veiled and, that numerous methodological ambiguities occurred; for example, in the

⁵ It is worth noting that Max Weber’s *Economy and Society* was published in Hungary in the same period as researches on stratification were in progress. In the early years of Hungarian sociology, Weber became in a sense the model sociologist. The reason perhaps being his credentials as a critic of bureaucracy – and consequently of state socialism – and as a source for a non-Marxist theory of capitalism. See Andorka 1995: 35–36.

⁶ MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 41/1967/85. ő. e.

⁷ MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 7/1974/447. ő.e.

⁸ MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 7/447. ő.e.; MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 4/1974/125–126. ő.e.; MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 7/1974/452. ő.e.; Andorka 1995a: 36–37.

1970s, those employees who were in co-operatives but did not complete agricultural work were also represented in agricultural physical labour-character groups (Róbert 2000: 226.).

In 1977, the party's Central Committee carried out a report on the state of sociology. The report established that the "researcher's allegiance to Marxist ideology is still not satisfactory in many cases." It was further emphasized that "the application of research techniques and methodologies used in civic sociology to the circumstances of socialist society requires critical adaption and an accurate knowledge of Marxist ideology."⁹ Nevertheless, surveillance on the part of the state seemed to recede, as in 1985 the modification of formerly used social categories was initiated. Conclusively, the category of "non-physical workers" was divided into two distinct categories: "intellectuals" and "employed intellectual workers".¹⁰

Status groups, life styles

Because of the economic changes that occurred at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the status-model no longer seemed suitable for depicting the social structure of society. Sociologists thus attempted to construct a more sensitive category-system. The old classification of people into a rigid employment structure was made more dynamic by including an investigation into the different ways in which people from the same employment category actually lived. Besides the employment-structure, researchers attempted to depict different life situations and people's life styles – primarily in the theoretical vein of Weber and Pierre Bourdieu (Kolosi 1984, 1987). These approaches can be considered as *structuration* models, since they attempt to explain the relationship between human agency and the social structure. These investigations had already explained the use of all adopted terms and related them to the circumstances of the era. They re-explored the complexity of social structure, and also aimed at understanding the way in which it had been implemented in state socialist society.

Lifestyle research had a particular relevance in Hungarian sociology, as these studies depicted special ways and forms of social differences, while other sociological analyses characterized "socialist" society by a relatively low level of inequality. In the beginning, Hungarian sociologists studied lifestyle by "time budget" surveys (Szalai 1972). Later, it was argued that everyday life consists of the struggle over society's resources; and researchers also distinguished between material and cultural lifestyle fields, applying Bourdieu's (1984) two-dimensional approach. The status-group model, already used in the 1981–82 data analysis – carried out by Tamás Kolosi and Ágnes Bokor – reflected the new sociological approach. It was Kolosi who offered a definition for status groups, a model that proposed a new stance to describe social structures.¹¹ Instead of an occupation-based model, Kolosi took a model into consideration that was based on a complex system of aspects and was condensed into the notion of "life situation." Social status, in his wording, was the "typical life situation of individuals and families" within the "inequality system," and argued against the clearly hierarchical nature of social stratification (Kolosi 1984: 11–12). As an alternative to the occupation-based model, Ágnes Utasi determined lifestyle groups, and thus distinguished certain social groups from one another.¹²

⁹ MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 41/1977/281. ő.e.

¹⁰ MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 7/1985/727. ő.e.

¹¹ Kolosi 1987: 67. This model also referred to Max Weber's notion "Stand" (in English, "status group"), which was differentiated on the basis of non-economical qualities.

¹² Utasi 1984. Recent lifestyle investigations: Utasi 2000; Utasi–A. Gergely–Becskeházi 1996.

Obviously, the development of the Hungarian economy primarily affected those interpretations in the 1980s that represented the structure of society in terms of state redistribution and the market. Two theoretical models, by Tamás Kolosi (1988) and Iván Szelényi (1988, 1996), were constructed to depict the structural changes within the “socialist” society. These approaches attempted to describe mainly the specific features of Hungarian economic and social development in the state socialist system. They proposed the idea of two great forces shaping the social structure: state redistribution and the market. Thus, sociologists described Hungarian society of the time with the duality of the structure of redistribution and that of the market (Tamás Kolosi’s L-model and Iván Szelényi’s double triangle one).

Objectives of social research

In the state socialist system, sociology could establish its reason for existence and construct its identity by merely emphasizing the objectivity of its scientific investigations (since, to the “real” processes, even those in power had to pay attention). In this role-interpretation, which can be called socialist modernity, the missionary zeal of science, its faith in development, scientific objectivity and in the cognizable nature of social reality, concealed the inevitable, indirect efforts of the state ideology. The discipline has built up its myths in accordance with that concealment.

In this regard, Pál Tamás’s analysis of the history of social science seems quite appropriate. Tamás claims that social research in the 1960s was “in the role of radical social criticism”; in the early 1970s, it proposed a social science for the study of society in its totality, while in the second half of the decade realized a “professional program” and, in the 1980s it grew into a “settled discipline” (Tamás 1985: 219–226). State ideology, nevertheless, still limited the latitude in which the social sciences could work. István Harcsa, professional advisor at the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, in an interview summarized the previous statement as follows: “Since sociology was very much an overburdened discipline, in order to survive it needed to make certain compromises and (not challenging higher authority) one of its survival strategies was to make certain compromises, and there was no point in *running head-on into a brick wall*” (Harcsa 1991: 41). However, other authors emphasize that sociology also has a history of being independent from politics (e.g. from direct political influence) and its development can be interpreted not only through institutionalization and through research possibilities, but also within a unique theoretical framework, such as the changes in the public sphere during state socialism (Becskeházi–Kuczi 1992).

Until the change of regime, a number of topics were also considered taboo. Officially, it was hardly possible to speak about poverty, and discriminated social groups were completely left out from the discourse.¹³ Even when sociological works carefully referred to these phenomena, they were impelled to describe them euphemistically: individuals and groups were labelled as being “multipally disadvantaged” or “struggling with problems of adaptation” or they were disapprovingly referred to under the terms of faulty behaviour or deviance (Szalai, 2002: 35). Yet on this – ideologically pregnant – discursive ground, some literary pieces could accomplish a special mission, such as Endre Fejes’s family novel *Rozsdatemető* (*Generation of Rust*), which tried to deconstruct the myth of the working class, or sociographies attempting to capture the everyday life of the discriminated.

¹³ When István Kemény held his famous academic lecture on poverty in 1970, this study started off with the euphemistic title *A survey on the life conditions of the members of the society having low income*, he was temporarily removed from the Institute of Sociology. The final study was encrypted, and placed in a safe-deposit of the president of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (Kemény 1991: 183).

In the absence of any other source, historiography, after the change of regime, could not take anything else into consideration when scrutinizing post-1945 social phenomena except for the previously mentioned models. Historians, however, while adapting the categories and achievements of social research seemed to have forgotten about the history and historicity of sociology. This could have happened due to the modernist approach of historiography: that historians tended to view sources as imprints of a reality that is factually absorbable.

The uncritical, automatic acceptance of the conclusions of sociological works that were created in the various periods led to a historical image of the development of Hungarian society according to which this society was homogenized in the 1950s, then gradually transformed from the 1960s onwards, with further differentiation during the coming decades (Romsics 2000: 473). Studies on the subject undeniably reflect viewpoints of the 1960s that made possible the scrutiny of social structures and mobility through the utilization of the worker-peasant-intellectual categorical trinity, serving the dominant state ideology. It is this lack of conceptual self-reflection with regard to historiography that explains why several historians believe they are discussing social reality, but are in fact only interpreting categories formulated in the wake of various party decrees.

Conclusions of historical studies on state socialism – seemingly well-grounded and referenced – are often not only based on the phenomena examined, but are also coloured by the period's accepted conceptual framework. Our present knowledge about the society of the age is, to a large extent, is based on these concepts, too. The abovementioned theoretical models that defined solutions of empirical studies for decades were, in fact, based on a multi-scalar categorization of occupation. Tibor Valuch, social historian and author of a recapitulation on Hungarian social history, could not but conclude: "since research on the subject is only relatively accessible, social strata can solely be divided by the character of occupation and the social position that comes with it" (Valuch 2001: 118).

SOCIAL CHANGE – INVESTIGATIONS ON SOCIAL MOTIONS

Social mobility

The possibilities for Hungarian sociology were determined by limited scientific liberty, which was slightly extended by "pro-science" politicians of the party, and which researchers – under the compulsion to accept certain ideological bounds – tried to widen.

It is due to this special ideologically constrained situation that investigations of social mobility attained such a high priority in the period. Since, according to the ideology of the system, there was equality in "socialist society," sociologists had fewer possibilities to conduct investigations on stratification than they could with social mobility, as the latter marked the lessening of inequalities (Kolosi 1982: 4). Sociologists researching social mobility aimed to analyze possible directions within mobility ("social rising and declining") that were thought to be found between social strata. It was assumedly the dominating liberal philosophy of the 19th century that idealized high degrees of social mobility (Róbert 1982).¹⁴ Social mobility is thus interpreted as a measure of openness in a society. In Hungary, the

¹⁴ In democratic societies, this means the possibility of a socially non-predetermined course of life where individuals could pursue paths that they are set on, or have skills in.

openness of society could not be demonstrated in any other way; one could only present a hierarchy and the motions between subordinated and superior social groups. Structural changes were thus only made visible on this model through social mobility processes.

Thus, those studies that were to prove the myth of equality eventually underlined the very hierarchical approach of sociology. This phenomenon, therefore, demonstrates that sociological research adjusted itself to state socialist ideology and mainstream Western methodology at once. Kolosi's description of those social groups that "produce and mediate worth" goes as follows: "It is better to live in a suburban area than in a homestead, to live in comfort than discomfort, to go on vacation when possible than to work, to eat more meat than to eat less, to earn a degree than to be an uneducated worker; society works like this, independently from whether everyone agrees with these statements or not." This description seems typical of the mid-1980s (Kolosi 1984: 14–15).

On the basis of the conceptual trinity, mobility-research originally depicted the motions between the peasant and worker classes and the intellectual stratum. Later, the status model proved an opportunity for deeper investigation of social changes. Rudolf Andorka differentiated work-character groups when investigating social mobility; this model offered room for international comparison where the referred English and American pieces of research also used a similar categorization (Andorka 1970), and data from the pre-war general census were also taken into consideration in a historical analysis (Andorka 1982: 265). However, the principle thesis of mobility-investigations has not changed: one of the main directions of Hungarian mobility since the Second World War was the motion from the working class and from the peasantry towards the white-collar and intellectual professions (Andorka 1982: 73), and the high percentage of mobility indicated an openness and a democratization of the "socialist society". The potential success of this openness would thus be measured by the "eventual access of other social groups to the intellectual stratum" (Andorka 1978: 71). Since then, this argument and, that social change was generally positive and produced worth, has been questioned several times, which will be pointed out further on in this paper.

The thesis of equality was perverted in 1967 for the first time. Based on 1963 data, István Kemény showed that upward mobility was smaller in Hungary than in Western countries and, that the mobility ratio was itself an outcome of a changing employment system. The number of technical employees and those in production is also a direct consequence of extensive industrialization. The study implied that the growing number of intellectual employees and social mobility were stemming from economic growth, not political intention (Kemény 1991: 182).

It has been recurrently pointed out that social change in Hungary was a direct outcome of structural social mobility; thus, it can be interpreted through the structure of production and employment. The occurrence of circular mobility, which would have proved an open social structure, in fact was atypical and rarer in the period than in 1949 (Andorka 1982: 251). (It is worth noting, however, that this claim is also built on the presupposition that society is hierarchically structured, where entities may move "upward" or "downward".¹⁵) This interpretation is also underlined by other comparative analyses, which argue that changes applied to educational systems and the handling of social equality in former state socialist countries did not make a coherent "pattern of mobility" (Müller-Lüttinger-König-Karle 1989). It is known that, in the analysis of economical and social relations, a

¹⁵ However, this mechanical approach of social motions was criticized already in the 1970s, for example by Rudolf Andorka (Andorka 1970; Róbert 1982; Kozák 2002:12, 19–21).

political reading is also possible, for – as a consequence of economical and political priorities — the educational system was itself shaped by political intentions. Nevertheless, for the aforementioned reasons and as, it is “not socialism per se, which triggered new forms of social mobility” (Andorka 1995a: 420).

Modernization, modernity

Partly under political influence, and partly under the influence of international compulsions, the thesis of modernization was formulated in 1980's Hungary. It concerned with social development in Hungary after 1945. According to this argument, industrialization determined the main characteristics of social development, and in spite of different political systems, social changes in the Western and state socialist countries could be compared and investigated under the same terminology and concepts.¹⁶ Under the banner of modernization, Kálmán Kulcsár (1980, 1986) argued that the state had become the exclusive actor of economic and social life, and the number of white-collar workers had increased along with bureaucracy. By emphasizing the modernizing function of the state, sociologists obviously wished to have an influence on politics, but at the same time, they also created a legitimate basis for reforms to be carried out by the system. Expansion of the modernization thesis can also be interpreted as proof that sociology spoke a common language with state power even in the 1980s, and, that through the “widening of public opinion,” sociology started to gain an influential, mediatory role (Szalai 1994: 475; Léderer 2002: 148–149). In light of this, the rapid popularity of the modernization thesis is reasonable; however, the claim according to which there is a causal relationship between modernization and social change — which is held by many historians even today (Romsics 2000: 471) — can be challenged.

According to a more dynamic interpretation of modernization, it was not the central power but rather the modernization movement of individuals (agricultural small-scale production and rebirth of private enterprises) that stimulated development. According to this view, modernization can be best viewed as an interaction of social self-organizations and the efforts of the party-state. The factor that the state did not limit – in reaction to changes in society and sociology – a persuasion of interest among individuals, in fact helped sustain the operation of the system. The common message between the state and sociology was that the state was headed in a stable, harmonious direction while in fact trying to legitimize its reign through a support of spontaneous modernization (Szalai 1994: 475). Those who gained interest from “modernization” were considered by party leaders as the base of the system's legitimacy; thus, propaganda and the politics of life-standards served as vehicles to widen this base. Nonetheless, it can be debated whether the apparent or real balance of these efforts were actually the product of contemporaneous discourses and the result of a continuous dialogue between power and science. It should also be mentioned that the thesis on modernization – looking at its genealogy and not its validity – did not take notice of numerous actors in society of the era. People living on the periphery of society, the discriminated and the underdogs of the transformations; in other words, those who experienced the *de facto* shrillness of state socialism were neglected in the modernization concept.

¹⁶ Aron 1964. The volume was published in 1967 in Hungarian, and it could also influence sociology of the era.

Changing objectives and revised concepts

After the change of regime, when circumstances would have allowed an investigation into the parallels between social development in Hungary and the West, scientific discourse was overwhelmed by the sharp criticism of the previous political system. In the new political and ideological situation historians – in light of theories on totalitarianism – rather concentrated on the description and the unveiling of evils of the past system, and underlined those negative tendencies that were related to economic and social phenomena. That is why the concept of “directed mobility” has been so popular in historical analyses. Antal Örkény, when scrutinizing mobility processes, defined “directed mobility” as a phenomenon typically occurring in state socialist countries, based on overall volunteerism and, which was a product of strict central control, by a limitation on general mobility. He also added, that “this change was largely motivated by a large-scale uncertainty, a sense of incomplete transition, a steady fear and the motivation to be liberated from something” (Örkény 1989: 23, 26).

The clear, public definition of the state socialist system as totalitarian eventually led to a new, but still normative-based reading of social mobility on the part of historians. Certain authors, thus, interpret social mobility and social processes in general through the dichotomic lens of present democracy and the past totalitarian system, in which, results based on the one-dimensional, occupation-based structure analyses are accepted without criticism. In contradiction, Rudolf Andorka (1982) in his monograph repeatedly shed light on the shortcomings of adopted theories and methods.

Starting from the years of transformation in 1989, sociologists were leading in an attempt to answer as to what had happened with the Hungarian pre-World War II middle class (Gáti–Horváth 1992; Róbert–Sági–Utasi–Kovách 1995; Utasi–A. Gergely–Becskeházi 1996), and if the development of the middle class had continued after 1948 (Szelényi 1980a, 1980b; Kovách 1991). Studies on these historical issues can be read as documents revealing how the conceptual language of social history can be employed to understand the sociological categories of the time (Csíti 1997).¹⁷ For a long time, historiography concerned with pre-transition Hungary could not follow the new formations of sociology after 1989, as it strictly fixed its attention on the analysis of the past system, and while doing so, absorbed the conceptual language of then-contemporary sociology.¹⁸

Horribile dictu, the differentia specifica of the state socialist era, in the eyes of historians, resided in the terminology created under state socialist ideology; therefore, historiography tied its own conceptual language to the very heritage of socialism.

RECENT HISTORICAL APPROACHES TO THE PERIOD

Several studies reflect on the question as to how governments of Western democracies managed to influence social processes. Governmental impact is a definitive question in case of state socialist systems even more, where the principal goal was a redefinition and reorganization of the whole of society. In state socialism, the most salient ambition of the system was – in order to legitimize itself – to launch radical social change, which, consequently, was much articulated by propaganda as

¹⁷ In this case, the dual structure of society of the era – represented by the traditions of Hungarian sociology and historiography – echoes the duality of conceptual language and ideology.

¹⁸ In contrast to this, it is worthwhile to note that if sociological categories used in the state socialist era are completely discredited, realities occurring in Hungarian and Western democracy, the comparison of social processes before and after 1945 and, the answering of the question as to whether there is continuity or discontinuity, are also corrupted.

a huge success.¹⁹ The directed nature of social processes – in my view – not only meant the forced alteration of everyday habits of individuals, but the modification of social discourse from above and, consequently, the very destruction of past structures through it.

Identity politics of the system – emerging on the political landscape of the dictatorship and constructing prevailing ideas about social classes – eventually suppressed self-organization in society in the sense that it made these social groupings invisible by the means of these discourses. The mission is, accordingly, to revise theories on mobility and modernization and to revisit old structures based on the worker-peasant-intellectual Stalinist model. However, the question is whether or not, by emphasizing continuity in social processes and by accepting the conceptual language of the social history, and the sociology of today, we should make room for a new discourse and the exclusivity thereof. Are we not ignoring effects of discourses from the past? In general, the question is: what models are there to describe the state socialist society by combining the angles of small actors and interaction, but also adding the new aspect of the competitive portrayals of society of the era?

A totalitarian perspective

Hungary has its own extensive literature on the era of state socialism, with a steady stream of monographs (re)evaluating the whole of the period. Previously well-established ideas on the state and society of state socialism have come under review in the last decade. It is worth, therefore, surveying the approach of most recent studies on the subject. The application of a totalitarian paradigm in Hungary is intertwined with a rightist, ideologist and anticommunist rhetoric. It is typical that the society of the era is depicted solely and exclusively through the machinery of terror and metaphors of oppression and resistance. In contradiction to this tendency, the frequently quoted Hannah Arendt (1958) herself did not mainly investigate the operation of state-directed terror, but analyzed the historical context in which totalitarianism could evolve in the first place.

According to Arendt's analysis, totalitarianism developed in modern mass societies that offered grounds for anti-humanitarian ideas, and later the totalitarian systems also affected these societies. Arendt described the world of totalitarianism as a system in which social classes do not exist. However, Hungarian historians have largely ignored the main thesis of this theory: that the sustainability of the system was interpreted and comprehended through the lack of traditional self-organization. In the beginnings, there was no other explanation for the sustainability of the system, apart from its suppressive nature and the organization of terror. From a totalitarian perspective, the system and its operation were depicted in a motionless state. According to this approach, the society of Hungarian state socialism was also suppressed by totalitarian power, and social inequalities were also determined mainly by power relationships. However, it was a more essentialist view on state socialist society of Hungary than the former sociological analyses; for example the investigation of stratification by the "character of the work done", which was a combination of working conditions, power/authority, knowledge, etc.

¹⁹ It was politics, thus, that ordered scientific discourse in these directions, by means of the multiple devices of compulsion and financial pressure.

Modernization revisited

Another theory of Western historiography finds a rationale for the existence and operation of Soviet systems in the processes of modernization. According to this interpretation, the reason behind the sustainable nature of these systems lies in this very point: it was modernization that served as support for the legitimization of state socialism. However, this theory does not seem to offer a full description of social and economic models of state socialism. Attempts at modernization during the years of state socialism highly prioritized the state sector within the economy, and thus the industrial sector; while the so-called “second economy” (the partially permitted private sector), especially that of households, was generally ignored. According to empirical studies, state socialism was a stillborn attempt at modernization, for it was not able to stimulate aggregation and dissolve Hungary’s peripheral position against the West (Laki 2009).

Béla Tomka’s analysis, which investigates economic growth from a wider perspective and on a greater temporal scale, shows that economical distance between Hungary and Western Europe, in contrast with claims from the state socialist era, only grew. This was mainly due to an ineffective system of investments, a failure to develop human resources, and the absence of an open attitude towards international commerce and foreign capital. Hungary’s political climate, in which economic relations to the West were limited, largely contributed to this failure and burdened long-term development (Tomka 2011: 220).

Nevertheless, it can also be claimed on the basis of “multiple modernity” theory, that social, economic processes cannot be interpreted uniformly. Earlier, social scientists attached the evolution of modernity to certain phenomena such as technical development, industrialization and urbanization, which were seen as inevitable and essential factors in unilinear modern economic and social development (Niedmüller et al. 2008). Historians of today, however, seem to deny this claim and refuse the idea of a homogeneous western modernity that eventually spread in Europe. Followers of multiple modernity theory attempt to prove that the monolithic view of modernization is not pre-ordained and the process of modernization occurred in different ways; different patterns of modernization can be observed in Europe and other continents, within regions and even societies (Niedermüller et al. 2008; Hroch–Miroslav–Klusakova–Luda 1996). The theory of modernization was mainly applied to legitimize modern state power, and it still has a similar connotation. Theories on convergence (an investigation on development differences between regions and countries) have, thus, also been revised in European history (Kaelble 1987; Tomka 2008).

Even among those historians that object to the theory of modernization, some link the long-term operation of state socialism in Hungary to its social achievements. Eszter Bartha (2009, 2013), for instance, sees legitimacy in the civilizational and social achievements of the Kádár system and describes it as welfare dictatorship. This statement is contradicted by those claims that point out the incomparable nature of Hungarian and Western social development. Official discourses from the Kádár era point to the conclusion that standards of living were growing and that the period could be characterized by relative welfare. Most recent research, carried out by Tomka or Sándor Horváth, show the contrary. The basis of comparison, in case of new analyses, is no longer composed of countries of the Soviet system but social policies of Western democracies. Since in post-1956 Hungary, the main function of socio-politics was to legitimize state-institutions, the state, and “socialist” system itself, the very structure and goals of the social system differed from those in the West (Horváth 2012; Tomka 2003a; Tomka 2003b). This

system did not allow the pursuit of interests and above all, collective action. Characteristics of the regime followed those reigning practices that evoked the discrimination of minority groups and the poor.²⁰

Mobility revisited

Another approach to historiography was that of revisionism, which viewed the characteristics of Soviet states as detached from previous interpretations. The paradigm-shift occurred in the 1980s, with Sheila Fitzpatrick among the participating historians. She defined Stalinism as a “cultural revolution,” which, due to the great degree of social mobility in the Soviet Union, not only absorbed the whole of society but also managed to build a social base for itself. Fitzpatrick interpreted the subsistence and legitimization of the system through the lens of ordinary people who in fact benefitted from social mobilization (Fitzpatrick 1979). The investigation into social mobility is also a crucial question of Hungarian social history. The deconstruction of state socialist-era descriptions of society pinpoints the fact that the conceptual trinity of worker-peasant-intellectual has never been truly capable of capturing experiences of the time. Consequently, this conceptual trinity is the least useful for historical analysis today, since its main goal was to legitimize the state socialist system by tracking mobility between the mentioned categories (Majtényi 2005).

Statistics from the period, as well as sources from archives, tend to describe situations in which people from the country eventually urbanized, or where peasants became workers, and workers intellectuals. Personal experiences, naturally, are manifold to a greater extent, which can be observed through diaries, interviews, and oral history in general (Majtényi 2005). Nonetheless, this does not mean that only the individual self-interpretations and -representations could be analyzed as empirical “facts”, since elements of collective life (“social facts”) can also exist independently and are able to exert an influence on the individual. Furthermore, ordinary people also had to reflect on concepts and discourses promoted by state power. It is questionable, however, as to what extent entities of society accommodated expectations more than only to the use of prefixed terms and language. To pin down social processes, a call for the notion of “acculturation” might be of use. Through acculturation, the analysis of how entities, families, and communities, voluntarily or forcedly, adapted to and shaped the dominant culture, could be carried out.

Bringing a Western perspective

In the portrayal of society, the chief aim is not to set out statistical data, but much rather to deconstruct categories carried from the state socialist system and to recreate a new conceptual framework for analysis. Our question is how social categories were constructed and how they managed to form new group identities, if at all. The introduction of these concepts triggers numerous crucial ideological questions. The author of this paper finds it problematic that Hungarian historians rarely touch upon the ideological background of the subject of their research.²¹ In Hungary, ideological discussions, therefore, appear under the veil of some scholarship and scientific discourses, as though historians were debating over objectively interpretable processes. Personal reflections and perspectives are thus left invisible and obscure. In modernity, according to Hannah Arendt,

²⁰ Due to the high rates of poverty among the *ROMA* population in Hungary, this group was seen as a “social group” with problems of adaptation of “socialist” norms in the official discourses. See Dupcsik 2009; Majtényi–Majtényi 2012.

²¹ This stands in contradiction with German traditions of historical debate, where researchers have mostly demonstrated their ideological viewpoints.

we can give meaning to our own time by recreating and reviving the past. The pearl diver does not dive to the bottom of the sea to discover everything there; his interest is only pearls and coral. This applies even if the one sets out to present nearly every phenomenon, including those less important for his own interpretation.²²

In Eszter Bartha's above-mentioned analysis (2009, 2013), workers in 1956 acted as a revolutionary class,²³ in reaction to which the state offered better standards of consumption in the Kádár era, which predominantly made workers accept the system. However, it is questionable, whether the working class existed as a unified, homogeneous entity in the era at all. Marxist criticism against the system seems to automatically validate the Marxist model *per se* in the portrayal of society. The author of this essay finds the interpretation of "working class" as an analytical category problematic. Workers, state employees really, tended to refer to themselves as members of the working class, but this process was directed by state ideology and primarily represented in the level of public discourse. Though this phenomenon inevitably affected the self-definition of ordinary people in the public sphere, however, it did not necessarily determine social processes, and the formation of social groups.

Another method to capture and accurately portray social processes in state socialist Hungary is an application of those models that allow a comparison between processes in different countries and historical periods. Though these concepts would not represent the core of state socialist-era discourses, on occasion, they might be accurate in pinning down elements of collective experiences. The author of this research does not deny viewing Hungary's state socialist past from the perspective of liberal democracy. In effect, the author offers a scholarly angle, using categories to allow a comparison with the democratic societies and only slightly reflecting on the self-legitimacy of the past system. However, these concepts can only be applied with careful criticism and self-reflection. If we truly want to reflect on social processes that bridge political systems, we look for historical continuity; the society of pre-1989 Hungary cannot be treated as an improper part of history. Social and cultural continuities are in force to a much greater extent than we would assume by the evaluation of successive historical eras. It is typical that, while scrutinizing schemas of classification in the pre-World War II society of Stalinism, Sheila Fitzpatrick (2000) observed that class status was not only defined by an individual's current relation to production mechanisms, but also by a pre-revolution status and the status of ancestors of the individual. This view implies that state socialist society did not exist in its own time, but shows temporal continuity. It is, therefore, interpretable from a different temporal scale and in the context of extended social processes.

An everyday life perspective

For a relatively ideologically neutral interpretation of state socialist Hungarian society, the portrayal of everyday life and everyday situations might offer a solution. Recently, Tibor Valuch – the author of the first scientific synthesis on the subject of post-1945 social history (2001) – has conducted research into everyday life history (Valuch 2004, 2006, 2013). This approach can

²² "Like a pearl diver who descends to the bottom of the sea, not to excavate the bottom and bring it to light but to pry loose the rich and the strange, the pearls and the coral in the depths, and to carry them to the surface, this thinking delves into the depths of the past, but not in order to resuscitate it the way it was and to contribute to the renewal of extinct ages." Arendt 1969: 50–51.

²³ Hannah Arendt (1958a) claimed in her classic work that there was almost no robbery or looting in 1956, i.e. mob rule did not take hold. Relying on published sources, Ständeisky presents some of the more carnival-like moments of the revolution. She shows that revolutionary and workers' councils did not form immediately, and all kinds of things happened from day to day (Ständeisky 2010). Several, following Arendt, described Hungary's uprising as a workers' revolution against a totalitarian regime which called itself a workers' state. Bill Lomax directly described the Hungarian revolutionary workers' organisations as a self-administering state of workers' councils (Lomax 1976; Lomax 1990). For the latest criticism of this view, see Pittaway 2012: 230–56.

be taken as a breakthrough in Hungarian social history, since the overall structure of society can also be pinned down by interpreting the social distinctions in the area of everyday life (how the individuals and the groups constructed their lifestyles, following former social and cultural traditions). Such an analysis offers the possibility to take over the concepts of elite, middle, lower- and underclass into the Hungarian social historical discourse on state socialism. However, a number of methodological problems can be named concerning this approach, as well. Some researchers do not consider cadres of state socialism part of the elite, for in their rise, there was no such competition or professional competence involved that would have had them qualified under the same principles as in case of Western elite groups, though this group clearly separated from the rest of society via its separable standard of living an exceptional status (Majtényi 2009). Furthermore, certain social phenomena can be interpreted as an extension of the middle class: the formation of a wide employee's society, predictable lifestyles, and provisions seemingly promoting welfare. On the contrary, we hardly find exemplars of financial independence, persuasion of civil autonomy, or social practices typical of the middle class and the bourgeoisie (Dupcsik, 2008). Another possibility for researchers is to capture Hungarian society of the era through the category of gender (Bakó–Tóth eds. 2009; Tóth 2010).

The question is how these concepts relate to a society in whose glossary these terms do not exist at all; in other words, does the concept exist because it is verbalized (talked about) and, can it possibly exist when it is not? On the one hand, it is questionable whether the categories evolving in the discourses of the era are capable of portraying the proper social processes or not; and neither is it obvious whether the concepts of any era can be applied to describe the society of another period and mindset, or whether they are reflections of contemporary ideas.

Stephen Kotkin's monograph on Soviet cities was undeniably a great influence on Hungarian historians. Kotkin claimed, that "Stalinism was not just a political system, let alone the rule of an individual. It was a set of values, a social identity, a way of life. When it comes to Stalinism, what needs to be explained and subjected to detailed scrutiny are the mechanisms by which the dreams of ordinary people and those of the individuals directing the state found common ground in this Soviet version of the welfare state." (Kotkin 1995: 23.) According to this, state socialism was primarily a practice of habits, attitude, and linguistic terms. A similar piece was written on the Hungarian city of Sztálinváros (Horváth 2004), and the everyday life of a socialist brigade (Tóth, 2007). The power and degree of authority depends on the actions and character of its subordinated individuals. Using Foucauldian concepts of power relations, revisionist historians argue that in order to comprehend the system, the underlying collective and individual motives of action need to be considered as well. Individuals subordinated to dictatorial systems do not solely subordinate themselves, but through their actions accept, shape, and recreate the system in their habitual, everyday environment. József Ö. Kovács's piece (2012), which surveys employed and experienced violence in collectivization, implies that this approach does not actually contradict the essential claims of totalitarianism theories (which link the substance of dictatorship to modern forms of violence), but examines the everyday implementation of totalitarianism and seeks the explanation of the sustained existence of totalitarian systems in everyday life.

The portrayal of individuals

German everyday-life historians developed a highly influential theory to describe the legitimacy of dictatorships and the effect and significance of individual actions in these regimes. This theory borrows the concept of *Eigensinn* ("sense of one's own interests") from German literature and philosophy to describe the behaviour and motivations of the "majority" (i.e. people who

were neither enthusiastic disciples nor active opponents of the Nazi or Soviet dictatorships but whose everyday work and passive behaviour, by not presenting resistance, helped these systems to build up and endure). The word implies a kind of self-sufficiency and independence; not the free will of free persons, but the will of citizens who can (and do) adapt to various kinds of regime while keeping their own direct interests in view (Lüdtke 1994). Set against this is the concept of autonomy, the kind of everyday behaviour which inhibits the emergence and persistence of totalitarianism and which should, in principle, be typical behaviour in a democracy. It is a perplexing question as to whether it is democracy which creates autonomous behaviour, and dictatorship which creates *Eigensinn* and everyday forms of collaboration, or whether these processes are carried out reversely. Naturally, the perspective of study obviously has a bearing on the answer. In adopting the notion of *Eigensinn* Hungarian social historians also analyzed how ordinary people adopted the political and social aims declared by the state socialist system in the framework of their own worlds (Majtényi 2005).

The portrayal of individuals in the formation of social processes can only be accurately carried out through the study of everyday practices, over which the state power did not have omnipotent surveillance at all. Individuals, in fact, were able to define themselves and their environment in full possession of this power and in accordance with their possibilities. Personal reflections and interpretations did not, however, get very much publicity and could barely affect social discourses; while the state, given its power over discourses and interpretations, could impose a conceptual-linguistic dictatorship on individuals. In the last decade, micro-historical and oral history research projects attempted to revise the earlier portrayal of state socialist society, which had been mainly based on representative sociological surveys (although sociological interview-making has been also practiced since the early 1970s). The experience of unskilled women workers in state socialist Hungary was studied on the basis of oral history interviews, and it was investigated how they constructed their multiple identities as workers, consumers, and women (Tóth, 2007). In a micro-historical monograph, it was also analysed how the social identities of youth gangs had been constructed since the 1960s, and how Hungarian hippies could express their alternative identities (Horváth 2009). Sociologists published hermeneutic case studies, such as the book edited by Éva Kovács (2008) on the Kádár period conducting narrative life-story interviews and analysing them through the adoption of methods of hermeneutic interpretive phenomenology.

However, a use of discourse analytic methods in social history also could lead to a more complex understanding of the processes of social construction and their implications in state socialist Hungary. Unless we are able to uncover the effects of the identity politics that worked to create the virtual reality of state socialist society, and we recognize the nature and operation of the various discourses of power and science, we cannot reach a reliable understanding of the period's phenomena. Therefore, the question is not only whether individual interpretations of the age appear, or even can appear at all on the discursive levels of historical and sociological conceptualization, but also the extent to which the effects of these discourses transformed the empirical world of individuals.

DISCUSSION

In conclusion, recent social historical research has shown that the historian must keep in mind a set of realities when portraying state socialist society: firstly, a linguistic “reality”, as an indirect imprint of dominant ideology which framed then-contemporary social conceptualizations; secondly, realities of everyday situations that formed collective behaviour and sets of rules, but which cannot be automatically described using sociological concepts of the time due to their ideological nature; and thirdly, those individual practices which could be formulated by the ideological language of state socialism but adjusted to the rules of everyday life.

In this reading, the researcher finds him or herself in an epistemological labyrinth. The fact, that applied categories are constructs that intertwine with different eras and ideologies, follows from the analysis of conceptual history; these categories not only describe but also shape the subject of analysis. On the other hand, if enough attention is devoted to experiential analysis, a type of scrutiny which is rarely part of descriptions of greater social structures, we might reach Hannah Arendt’s conclusion. The limitation of personal liberties evokes such conformist actions that go against individual self-expression and collective action. In such a limitation, a lessening of formation of will (i.e. self-organization) can be envisioned; where the language and, thus, freedom for democratic organization ceases to exist. Ultimately, the application of any system of categories will flatten this message of our past. Personal and collective forms of behaviour in such a reading, though integral part of historical events, are not considered landmarks in history. Reaching back to the pearl-diver metaphor: neither are they pearls nor corals in the eye of the historian. It is for this very reason that we must persist in approaching our past according to our own perspectives and concepts.

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